

MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, 1897.

A PHILOSOPHER'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER IV.

It was not long after that eventful Sunday that, coming back to the inn one evening, unfortunately later than the hour I had specified as that of my usual return, I found Thomas Willoughby's card. On it was pencilled a few hasty lines, asking me to sup with him the following week. My landlady was much impressed by my acquaintance with the English Signor, who had drunk a glass of her best wine and refused the change for it out of a fifty-*soldi* piece, bidding her give it to her little slattern of a servant,—who had marvelled as much as her mistress. "Clearly you are in luck, Signor Pepe," she concluded, having given me a voluble account of the aforesaid miracle, "to be the friend of such a wealthy person; it would be kind of you to mention to him the excellent quality of the wine I can supply for every day use. I am sure I might ask him at least three *soldi* a quart above the ordinary price, and he would certainly pay it without a question."

I thought this exceedingly probable, but declined to intervene with Providence on my hostess's behalf, and hurried to my room to accept the invitation to supper in a note which Marika, the servant who had enjoyed his largess, was only too glad to carry to so wealthy and liberal a Signor.

That *tête-à-tête* supper was the be-

ginning of what, with even my long experience of the world, I can truthfully describe as the pleasantest intimacy I have ever known, and which, at the time, gave a new strength to my courage and self-respect. We occupied also rather singular relative positions, my friend and I, for though it might be generally assumed that I, as old and worldly-wise, should be the teacher and Thomas Willoughby the disciple, I can assure you nothing of the kind was the case. He talked and I listened, and was on the whole the recipient of a good deal of valuable knowledge of human nature; though I fear it proceeded rather from my opportunities of close study of the individual than from any conviction of the truth of his tenets.

As I have already remarked in the course of this history, it is not well to reveal too much to strangers at the first outset; and partly from the habit of caution, partly perhaps because I have been weak enough to shrink from detailing what may produce a very disagreeable impression, I have not hitherto taken the reader entirely into my confidence on one important point in my character. It is born solely of the foreign half of my nature, and is in fact so absolutely un-English that I fear an Englishman will find it hard to realise the possibility of such a sentiment as I am about to reveal.

I have said that a Jew was the cause of my becoming a recruit to

philosophy,—a man who in my hey-day would have fawned upon me if I had kicked him, and despised me if I had treated him like a gentleman; a man deterred by no despicable artifice which might mean making money, who shrank from no mean subterfuge or cunning trick if thereby he could gain the smallest financial advantage. This man,—though Heaven knows such a thing would never have been suspected from his life or appearance,—was already wealthy in the days of my prosperity, and coveted my Italian estate, on which (as I afterwards learned) he had for years set his heart. Like all his nation he endeavoured to get more than its value for his money, and with that object diligently bought up all my promissory notes which he could find in circulation, and I fear there were a good many. You have heard how he effected his purpose when the day of my adversity dawned; and since then I freely confess that, in spite of the support of philosophy which enabled me to meet my trials with fortitude, my struggles were dominated and guided by an abiding determination, an unchanging resolution, an intense desire,—the desire of revenge.

In England you do not know the meaning of this word; you are content to see your differences adjusted by glib-tongued lawyers who wage a wordy war and inscribe the results upon reams of blue paper tied with pink tape. You will even, should you succeed in proving your enemy in the wrong, accept money as compensation, and the whole process affords you full satisfaction. You have accomplished your end without the slightest personal risk, and your honour is not impugned nor your pride hurt by this circumstance. Everything is perfectly safe, easy, and correct; no one can cast a stone at you for your proceedings. What should a race like this know of revenge? How should such folk dream

of the hot impulse that courses through his very veins with an Italian's blood; the cherished desire, nursed in secret, if sudden outlet be impossible, that grows and grows and eats into every fibre of life; the intuition that is so dangerous from the very strength of its quietude, that can bid a man eat, drink, and be merry, live his life and love his love, be orderly or riotous as may best suit him, and can make all these things but a sheath and an envelope, hiding the secret seed of vengeance that will sooner or later bring forth its deadly fruit,—the seed that only loses its germinating power when the heart that holds it has ceased to beat?

For many years I had looked for the Hebrew usurer who had robbed me in the name of justice, but Moses Lazarich had disappeared. In my younger days I have known moments of imagination which gave me an exquisite joy, moments when I saw hot blood and cold steel, when I felt the dull thrust of the stab I dealt mount far into my wrist, moments when I used to hide myself lest others should know or guess what gleamed in my eyes and trembled on my tongue. Of late years my vision had visited me less frequently, but I had never lost sight of it for long at a time, and I knew that my purpose was as clear and unflinching as it had ever been. If I once had my chance, once wrested my opportunity from the hand of fate, I would ask nothing more, nothing, nothing, nothing! For the keen vivid joy of that one moment no price could be too high, no penalty too heavy. Afterwards,—what did anything matter? My own destiny might be the gallows, or the four walls of a life-long prison, or immunity, if I escaped the detection which I had not the least intention of avoiding,—I felt equally indifferent in the face of all three possibilities.

Strangely enough the one person in whose presence I was inclined to stifle and postpone my vengeful ideas was Thomas Willoughby, though why this was the case I could not tell. I had known many another man equally young and candid and self-confident, and many who from a certain point of view were of more stable character, but they did not affect me in the same way. Upon reflection I think it must have been the fellow's extraordinary capacity for extracting happiness from everything and everybody he met; he enjoyed his life in a perfectly fascinating way, reminding me in some degree of what a child in fairyland must be like. With his frank, finely-featured face and his ready smile opposite to me, I shrank from my most cherished desire. I could not muse on murder with that blithe, strong, young life so close at hand.

On a particularly warm day in June it chanced that Soloporto took advantage of one of the innumerable holidays it annually observes to inaugurate a regatta, which Thomas Willoughby had announced his intention of witnessing. "I know a bit about boating," he told me. "Not that I expect to see anything very remarkable in the way of rowing or sailing here, but there's always a capsize in a regatta; I am looking forward to that."

Animated therefore by an amiable desire to witness the discomfiture of his fellow-creatures, this jovial young gentleman had repaired to the town, where a great crowd had taken up its position on those quays which commanded the best views of the course. I had one of my fits of savagery on that same afternoon, and felt ill-disposed for enjoyment or society. I therefore began to consider in which direction there was the best chance of avoiding humanity, and soon found myself on the road that leads out of Soloporto past the Southern railway-

station, and quickly leaving far behind the hum of the crowd and the bells and whistles of the steamers.

My way was along a white road fringing the coast and following all its curves. On my right rose the steep bushy scarp of the cliffs on the top of which, or, rather, on a shelf scooped in which, ran the railway; but being many feet below it and few trains troubling the peace of a continental track, the soft murmur of the sea on my left was uninterrupted by the puff or screech of an engine. Once clear of the town there are no houses along this road, their existence being rendered impossible by the abrupt rise of the mountains which here leave only room for the road between themselves and the ocean.

The environs of Soloporto are singularly uninteresting, and there are few excursions worth a stranger's notice, unless he is prepared to extend them over one day. Such attractions as it has, however, Soloporto makes the most of; and hence it is that few people pass through without seeing Miramar, the *château*, once belonging to an ill-fated member of an imperial and royal family, towards which I was directing my steps. It stands on a small promontory at some distance from the town, its terrace-wall rising straight out of the sea, whose surface in calm weather mirrors back the reflection of shapely outlines and castellated roof. It is one of those places which seem to preserve and impart the tragic history of those who once occupied them. You may look across the gulf of Soloporto to Miramar when the weather is mild and hazy, and you will see its pale beauty rising, as it were, out of a faint blue mist alone, sequestered, and silent; or you may see it when thunder threatens and the air is so cleared by the first sudden gusts of wind that the castle seems close at hand, its every detail sharply

and whitely outlined against the rolling storm clouds hanging heavy and grey beyond. But always the same impression of loneliness assails you ; always the place seems aloof, like some half supernatural creation that holds for ever a dim and undefinable sense of sorrow and loss. At least that is the impression it produces on me.

Fortunately the majority of the inhabitants of Soloporto do not resemble me in this particular ; they walk about the beautiful gardens round the forsaken dwelling, chattering and laughing, making love and amusing themselves generally after their invariable custom, for the *château* and grounds are open all the year round. So Luigi and Nina from the Ghetto may walk where princely feet once trod, and Solomon Levi or Jacob Cœn may fling their nasal utterances abroad where royal secrets were once whispered. The pert, pretty, exquisitely dressed little milliners (Soloporto is full of milliners) with their lovers, and the open-mouthed simple peasants from the hills, follow the pompous caretaker through the state-rooms on a holiday, and listen to his monotonous recital of pictures and statues and portraits ; and they giggle and stare and go away without a thought of the ghosts that crowd so thickly in those empty rooms. Perhaps it is as well, for the more thoughtful of us, those who have the power of realising all the tragedy and pathos of even the simplest life, who can suffer with those who have suffered and lose with those who have lost, are none the happier for their power. There is often a grotesque as well as a pitiful side to sorrow, a humorous aspect of the results of pain either mental or bodily, which the brutality of the common mind is quick to seize and revel in. And it is well as I said before, for the superficially informed compose the mass of humanity,

and it is written, *He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*

As I walked on I gradually seemed to leave everything else behind me. The whistles of the steamers reached me now very faintly ; there was not a human being in sight, though I heard a peasant-boy singing as he herded goats among the patches of herbage that made green shelves in the sides of the cliffs. The sea was calm and bright, the air very still, and the atmosphere so clear that far over the gently swaying azure surface I could see the faint flat line on the horizon that marked the spot where proud Aquileia once reared its columns amid the smiling plains of the Forum Juli ; and where that line vanished into the haze of distance lay the sand banks of Grado, once a splendid roadstead with Imperial galleys riding at anchor.

The extraordinary sympathy of Nature lies, I think, in her many-sidedness ; one may find some point of contact for every mood, and hence her influence is always soothing.

As I pursued my way the little waves, lapping at the grey stones, seemed to harmonise with the persistence of the passion which at that moment held my soul in thrall. It was as steady, as unchanging, as continuous as they were, and as deadly, for, had not the hand of man intervened, those elusive fans of soft green water would have long since gnawed away the road, and crawled every year nearer to the base of the cliffs.

My thoughts were so absorbing that I must have unconsciously quickened my pace, for I found myself at my destination before I could have thought it possible I had come so far. I passed the iron gate, standing as usual wide open, and walked up the gravelled road to the front of the *château*, where the ornamental water was starred with white lilies, and the

air heavy with the scent of roses and honeysuckle. I mounted the steps of a terrace and reaching a spot where less cultivation had been attempted, passed beyond and down a sloping path which led to a large lawn laid out with flower-beds ablaze with colour and haunted by the hum of a thousand bees. It was a sunny sheltered place, and I was apparently quite alone there. A gentle breeze shook the fragrance from myriads of petals; the warm afternoon light caressed the soft outlines of the statues and sent its tremulous radiance among the sighing fir-trees that flung their spicy perfume abroad. It was all very quiet and orderly in that part of the garden, and at first I thought to stay there; but by and by my fierceness fought against the tranquillity around me; the regular array of flower-beds danced before my eyes in their set devices; their perfume stifled me; the statues seemed to gibe at my impotent wrath, and the wind crept about whispering of my vain strivings. Everything cried *peace* where there was no peace. I strode heavily away and climbed the winding paths among the shrubs, till I gained what is called the Battery, though the guns once mounted there have long since disappeared. Here I sat down on the low wall and looked straight into the water below. Just under the wall there is a tiny beach, a little yellow sand and a handful of shells caught among brown and sea-worn boulders that hold the treasures in their stony clasp; the tawny fringes of weed swayed in the translucent water with a gentle rhythmic motion; the sea made murmurous music, and crept with a little splashing among the rocks, decking them for a moment with a border of opalescent foam, then sinking away to return with a very magic of monotony.

As I stared drearily with musing eyes a sudden surge of passion swept

over me, and leaning forward I gripped a projecting stone in the wall with all my force; the rough edge broke the skin and bruised the flesh, and the stinging pain was a relief.

"Ah! if I had him here, we two together,—one thrust and it would be done——"

I thought that I had whispered the words through my clenched teeth, but I must have spoken them aloud for a voice answered me: "Yes, you are right! One thrust and it would be done. I will be near to help; I should like to see him die!"

I started to my feet aghast. Close by stood a woman poorly but decently dressed; tall and slight with shabby black garments hanging limply round her. She seemed about fifty years old, her hair, which was wavy and had once been dark, being now thickly sprinkled with grey; a scarf of rusty black lace was draped over it, and fell back from a perfectly colourless face in which the large black eyes were deeply sunken; her pale lips trembled and her hands plucked nervously at her dress as she stood looking at me.

"What did you say?" I asked sternly, sobered by the shock of this sudden appearance.

"I repeated what you said," she answered sullenly, her face growing fierce.

"Why should you want revenge?" I asked.

"Why?" she echoed, her voice rising shrilly. "Why? I will tell you why. Did anyone ever ruin your life, steal away your happiness, kill those you loved best by inches? Yes, I saw them die, husband and child, slowly, slowly, for want of the comforts I could not buy because he tricked me out of the money. Now do you understand why I want to kill the thief?"

"Whom do you want to kill?" I asked, almost mechanically, for I felt

as if something only half human stood before me.

"I don't know, I don't know now," she murmured; "all my thoughts have gone astray of late. I have forgotten his name, but I shall know his face, and sooner or later I shall see him again."

Her dark eyes burned with the terrible light of madness as she looked at me, and I shuddered to realise that just so must I have looked when a moment before this maniac had answered me with such strange aptness. Her face, with its awful hatred and quiet fury, was a mirror for my own soul from which I recoiled as I realised that here was a reflection of myself.

As I gazed at her half fascinated, all her passion suddenly died away, fading like one of those temporary negatives in photography, till her features seemed to become blurred and her manner irresolute. "I am going home," she said, turning away. Common humanity prompted me to offer her my help, but she waved me aside. "Thanks, I know my way; the road to the town is quite straight," and thus she disappeared.

I sat down again, trembling in every limb, on the wall whence I had risen when this strange personage had first addressed me. I had been so much taken by surprise, so fascinated during the brief interview that I had not stirred a yard from the spot, and now that I was once more alone I felt strangely weak and disabled. Yet from a logical point of view my terrible resolution should have been rather strengthened by the presence of one similarly inclined; I can affirm, however, that such was not the case, and that, on the contrary, the set purpose of years had received a shock which had shaken its very ground-work. Without being eminently conceited one may entertain a reasonably good opinion of oneself, and this being so,

the purposes and actions of the individual are coloured to himself by his own estimation of that self. Thus it had been with me; I had held myself an upright, just-minded person, intending only to effect the righteous punishment of him who had sinned against me, and now I felt like one disfigured who, having hitherto but seen his own face in flattering portraits, suddenly beholds it in a mirror: in a second his previous visions are blasted; never again can he think himself comely. And if it be thus with the outward appearance, how much more so is it with the mind! If the sight of faulty flesh be so fearful, what is that compared with the fearfulness of the vision that reveals to a soul its hideous kinship with the horror of a great sin. In one seathing flash I had seen this thing, and shrunk appalled from the inevitable truth. Nay more! I felt that my higher impulse, though it stirred, was choked beneath a leprous growth of evil, and I realised that for me it would be a hard matter to look back from the plough to which I had set my hand, to abandon a purpose to which for years my whole energy had added strength. I was fast in the fetters that myself had forged.

As I sat thus on the wall of the Battery at Miramar, the murmur of the water below and the sough of the fir-trees gradually soothed the turmoil of my brain, and for me too the air grew sweet and the breaking wavelets musical. I suppose that mind and body alike were exhausted by the events of the afternoon; at all events I shortly became drowsy, and throwing myself upon the ground under the trees fell into a deep sleep. How long it lasted I hardly know, but when I was roused the evening wind was blowing off the sea, and I knew the hour was late. One of the under-gardeners going his rounds had dis-

covered me and fortunately was an old acquaintance, or I might have been considered drunk and punished accordingly.

"*Benedetta*, Signor Romagno, and what might you be doing here at this hour?" he enquired. "The gates were closed long since."

"I am extremely sorry my good Marco," I said, scrambling to my feet. "I had no idea I had fallen asleep; how am I going to get out?"

"Oh, no trouble about that," he answered civilly enough. "I must close one or two of the hot-houses, and then I'll return for you and let you out of the private wicket. I have the key to-night, fortunately for you," he added with a grin; "the head-gardener has gone to the regatta."

I was glad to hear this, for the head-gardener was a lordly personage who gave himself innumerable airs, like all menials in responsible positions. "A thousand thanks," I said; "I will wait here."

I heard his footsteps die away on the gravel, and silence reigned once more. The sun had set, but the red of the west had faded to pink and pale primrose, while overhead was a clear, pale apple-green sky in which the first faint star hung tremulous. Both mind and body were refreshed with sleep, and though still conscious of a strange lassitude, there was a peace in my soul which accorded well with the peace around. When Marco returned I felt even loth to quit the place; however, it had to be done, and I followed him with a good grace. Suddenly a thought occurred to me. "Marco," I said, "did you see a woman come into the grounds this afternoon, an elderly woman dressed in black, looking pale and thin?"

Marco scratched his head and reflected. "Yes," he answered slowly, "I think I did see her about. On

account of the regatta so few people came in this afternoon that I noticed that woman. But why do you ask? Did you see her break any plants, or do any mischief?"

"No, oh no," I answered; "she was quiet enough; but all the same if she comes again you had better keep your eye on her, Marco. She is mad."

Marco laughed. By this time we had reached the wicket, and he spoke as he fitted in the key: "She seemed well behaved," he said, "and did no damage. Your fancy must be playing you tricks, Signor Romagno; the woman was just about as mad as you are! Good-night," and he locked the gate behind me.

Many a truth is spoken in jest, runs the proverb which recurred to me as I heard the gardener's last words. Perhaps he was right.

CHAPTER V.

As time went on I saw a good deal of Thomas Willoughby, and learned to like him still better. We sometimes walked into the country with Peter, and discussed philosophy and other trifles; sometimes we smoked in the garden of the *campagna*; and sometimes I sat in my friend's studio while he made believe to paint, for he was under the impression (not altogether an incorrect one) that he had some artistic talent, and as he had no need to earn a penny he worked at his canvases with considerable energy. And while he painted he talked; he was a splendid talker, never chattering or annoying you with truisms, or making conversation in order to hear his own voice. He talked as he did everything,—just as he pleased. His opinions were so broad that I sometimes had to seek hard for his principles; but I always found them, though their proportions, it must be

confessed, were occasionally microscopic. He discoursed of all things imaginable, touching every subject with a pleasant lightness peculiarly his own, which yet never degenerated into levity, because he was always in earnest ; he talked away so unhesitatingly convinced you wanted to hear what he had to say, that there was no effort about his conversations. Several of these impressed themselves upon my memory, and notably one upon the subject of love. At the moment the discussion began he was painting a portrait of myself as Sophaeles. He was pleased to say that I had a very fine profile (which indeed is the case), and requested me to sit to him with such a perfect anticipation of consent that I never dreamed of refusing.

"Love, my dear Signor Pepe," he began, dabbling his brush in some compound, "is a very curious thing."

"So I have heard," I answered drily; though for that matter I had ascertained the truth of his assertion by experience.

"I don't think anything has ever been so oddly misrepresented," went on my friend, exactly as though he was the one person in the world who held the key to the subject.

"Indeed," I said.

"Yes," he rejoined; "poets and novelists, and those kinds of fellows are perpetually harping on the matter; and you would really think they understood it after so much practice, but they don't, not one of them. If you love more than one person in your life, you can't really know what Love (with a capital *L*) is, they say. Your first love, your only love, the love of your life, the love of your youth,—that's their style; if you attach yourself subsequently, it's supposed to desecrate all your previous sensations;—and that's rubbish!" he concluded,

flourishing his brush preparatory for another dabble.

"Do you think so?" I enquired almost timidly; for really some of this young man's propositions were so exceedingly bold that at times he nearly took my breath away.

"I am sure of it," he said with calm conviction. "Love is not meant to be kept shut up like some delicate bit of crockery that you mustn't risk breaking more than once; it's an exceedingly serviceable every-day article, intended for frequent use. Why, how else are you to enjoy yourself? I adore Teresa, and the faithful creature vows an eternal love for me; in about a month's time she begins to think eternity a little monotonous; am I to bind the poor girl to me against her will, or make her miserable by declaring that separation will break my heart, when I know perfectly well it will do nothing of the kind?"

"I certainly have never looked at the matter in that light before," I murmured; "but suppose Teresa doesn't get tired?"

"Signor Pepe," he said with a twinkle in his eye, "I am still looking for a Teresa who will not tire; but I don't think I shall ever find one."

"But how will you manage when you marry?" I asked, deeply interested. "How about Mrs. Thomas Willoughby? Suppose she gets tired?"

"Oh, she'll be all right," he said with cheerful conviction.

"Yes, that is all very well," I said, "but suppose you get tired yourself."

"Ah, I sha'n't tire either," he said confidently, "not by that time."

"All that you have been saying," I remarked, "convinces me of one thing. You have never been in love yet, that's very clear."

"Indeed I have!" he answered indignantly. "Why, I fall in love once a month regularly."

"No you don't," I insisted ; "you don't yet know what love is——"

"With a capital L?" he interpolated.

"Yes, if you like, with a capital L," I answered.

"Well, Signor Pepe," he said laughing, "when the capital L stage comes on I will let you know, and ask your advice, for that will be a condition in which I have certainly had no experience."

Soon after this conversation I left Soloporto for over a week on a visit to one of my best clients in the tailoring and shoe-making lines; an old priest living in an exceptionally lonely spot on the Karst, the great chain of barren mountains rising behind Soloporto. About three times a year I used to visit Padre Cristoffero for a few days at a time, to overlook his clothes and foot-gear, about the condition of which he, being absent-minded, was apt to become completely oblivious, till he was almost in rags and shoeless. When the Padre discovered this state of things he used to summon me to the rescue, and some of my most peaceful hours were spent in his humble little dwelling. He was occupied, he told me, in some learned theological work, for the pursuit of which he required the most perfect quiet and seclusion; and in order to obtain these conditions he lived for several years in a spot as wild and sequestered as any inhabited by civilised man.

I will, therefore (praying the reader's pardon for what he may deem a digression), take him with me on one of my periodical visits to the old priest, discoursing on the way of everything that is worthy of observation, and begging him to remember that I am old, that the old are apt to be garrulous, and that, though Padre Cristoffero plays but a slight part in the tale I am telling still, he is after

all one of my *dramatis personæ*, and as such entitled to a description.

About ten miles from Soloporto as the crow flies, rise the grey ruins of the old castle of St. Servolo; they stand on the edge of a tremendous battlement of rock, below which lies a tiny village of the same name. In olden times the castle belonged to the Bishops of Soloporto, but three centuries ago, after being captured by the Venetians and re-taken by the Emperor, it passed as a royal fief into private hands; it was finally abandoned, and fell into the ruin which still faces seaward and feels the shock of every wind that blows through its shattered walls. The sun burns on it all the summer; the autumn rains lash it with their chill scourge; the wolfish mountain winter fastens its icy fangs into this poor lean carcase of a dwelling; even the spring, though she drops here and there among those grim and arid solitudes some of the gifts of blade and leaf that overflow her plenteous hands, can do nothing to soften the nakedness of decay that here reigns supreme; for the landward side of the castle is girt about with a low broad bank of stones, so compact and so earthless that not the wiriest herb may find sustenance.

Long before the walls of this fortress rose from the rock, long before the Roman had set foot on the marshes of Soloporto, long before the savages inhabiting the Karst forests had their being, so long before even that dim and distant past that the mind of man may reckon nothing of the time of its appearing, the mighty force of Nature wrought, within a stone's throw of the ruin of human handiwork, a dwelling that has survived to this day. Close by the castle, in the side of one of the numerous deep circular hollows with which the Karst is pitted, there is a dark gap in the rocks, now closed by a barred iron gate. If you open this,

and descend the rough stone steps that modern hands have fashioned for the way of modern feet, you will find yourself in a large grotto; it is damp and chill, and only a dim twilight struggles into its nearer recesses from the slit by which it is entered. There is a rude stone altar, and to the left of this a good-sized natural shallow basin in the rock, always full of the purest water. This spring never fails; and in the heats of summer and autumn when their wells run dry, the peasants from the village beneath the castle come to draw water for themselves and their beasts from the well of St. Servolo; for once, so runs the legend, this gloomy retreat sheltered a human being, and how this happened shall now be told.

Some time in the second century there lived in Roman Soloporto a noble Christian family of that nation, called Servilio; Eulogio, Clementia his wife, and their only child Servolo, who, from his earliest years, had been a singularly gentle and quiet boy, accepting the Christian doctrines inculcated by his parents, and caring nothing for the amusements and distractions of the Roman lads of that period. When he was twelve years of age, in obedience to the summons of a miraculous voice, Servolo secretly left the city and repaired to the lonely grotto on the Karst where for the space of twenty-one months he remained hidden from all the world, eating only "angels' bread," and drinking from the spring that still rises in the same spot. All day and all night he wept and bewailed his sins and shortcomings, and prayed for Divine guidance. At the end of the twenty-one months the same voice which had bidden him repair to the cave told him to return to his father's house; and this call also was implicitly obeyed by Servolo, who, however, on his way through the valley of Mocco, met with

an obstacle in his path in the shape of a huge dragon. For a moment the lad shrank back in terror; then summoning all his courage, and making the sign of the cross, he breathed on the monster, which was thus instantly disabled, and his conqueror pursued his way into the city.

His parents, who had mourned Servolo as dead, were rejoiced at his return, and the next few years of his life were marked by marvellous instances of his power of healing all manner of diseases. Numerianus, who was then Emperor of Rome, had formulated edicts against all Christians who refused to sacrifice to the heathen deities, and Julius, the prefect of Soloporto, putting these edicts in force summoned Servolo before the tribunal. Steadfastly refusing to sacrifice he was scourged with whips and loaded with chains, but his firmness only incited his tormentors to worse cruelties; his flesh was torn with iron hooks, and finally he was beheaded. His mother Clementia, with other Christians, came by night and rescued his martyred body for burial. But to this day they say that if any deceitful or wicked person, or any unclean animal, such as a pig, attempt to drink at St. Servolo's spring the water will instantly disappear as if by magic, to return when the polluting presence has been withdrawn; while such is the Saint's power over the Devil that one fragment of stone from the grotto will guard the house containing it from any possible entrance of the Evil One.

Padre Christoffero, however, was wise enough not to attempt to emulate good St. Servolo in his choice of a dwelling; for it would appear that men in bygone days, especially those of saintly tendencies, were far more robust than is the case at present, when any human being who attempted to reside even for a month in the

grotto would certainly die of rheumatism or lung-disease before the expiration of that time. But behind the ruins of the old castle lies a little graveyard, and beyond the wall of this was a small low stone building containing but three rooms. The cottage was constructed from the stones so abundant on every side; its walls were very thick, and the tiled roof was heavily weighted with stones placed along it in rows, as is the custom in this district to prevent their being carried away by the Bora. Therefore with the aid of a good stock of fire-wood, which he laid in for the winter, and the daily supplies of milk and so forth which the peasant woman who served him brought when she came up from the village, the learned Padre was able to defy the weather, and apparently the awful loneliness of the place also.

He was a gentle old man, with dreaming blue eyes and straggling silver hair; a man whose experience of life had left him singularly free from worldly taint; one of those who accept the incomprehensible without argument, and to whom faith comes as naturally as it does to a child. And in winter or summer, storm or shine, Padre Christoffero never failed to say his daily mass at the rough altar where St. Servolo once knelt in prayer. I am not by any means an ardent church-goer, but during my visits to the Padre I never failed to attend that invariable mass in the grotto. "My good Signor Pepe," he would say, looking at me with a benignant smile, as he reached for his broad-brimmed hat in the early morning, "you will perhaps like to accompany me to mass?" He used the same formula of invitation every day, so that a stranger might have fancied that he was making the proposal to me for the first time, and I always accepted it.

I have seen many a stately religious ceremonial; I have known the thrill of the silver trumpets that herald the Roman Easter; I have felt my spirit soar amid the rolling swell of the organ and the heavenly strains of hidden choirs; but nothing of that kind that I have seen or known impressed me so much as Padre Cristoffero's daily mass. The bowed white head, the gentle rapid monotonous voice that sounded far and faint in the dark recesses of this strange chapel; the trickle of the drops of water falling from the rock that canopied St. Servolo's well, the light of day that struggled from the narrow entrance far above, the hum of the breeze wandering over the open ground without,—all these things made an indelible picture upon my memory.

It was a fine warm evening when I again reached Soloperto, having concluded my visit to St. Servolo. The town seemed close and noisy as I passed through the crowded streets after the fresh pure air and silence of the Karst, and I was glad to get free of the houses and to find myself once more on the comparatively quiet road to my inn. As I neared the house, which stood in a walled enclosure with a gate opposite to the door, I suddenly saw the large yellow cat belonging to the establishment scramble upon the coping by means of the vines trained inside, and standing among the thick green leaves that crested the wall, with every hair on end and his wagging tail twice its usual size, spit defiance at a canine assailant who kept up a vigorous barking below.

It did not need Peter's sudden appearance in the road to tell me who was the cat's enemy, for I had already recognised his voice, and as I came up, ceasing his frantic attempts to scale the wall, he followed me, panting, through the gate. Inside, in the

paved court that was shaded by a spreading trellis of vines, I found, as I expected, Thomas Willoughby. He was sitting alone at one of the several little deal tables provided for customers, and had an untasted measure of wine before him.

"My dear Signor Pepe," he exclaimed, rising and advancing enthusiastically to meet me, "where in the world have you been hiding yourself? Your landlady could only tell me that you were absent for a fortnight or so, and had left no address; so for five days I have come daily to see if you had returned."

"I am sure it is very kind of you," I answered smiling; "but it has often happened that we have not met for a few days,—why were you in such a hurry to see me?"

"I have news, very important news, to communicate," he answered gravely; "also I have a confession to make; also I want your help in a matter, Signor Pepe, in which you alone can help me."

I could not help being rather startled at his words, and still more so at the way he spoke them; he appeared so remarkably in earnest. "What can be the matter?" I said. "However, if you will wait while I go up-stairs and put down my parcel, I will join you in a moment and hear all you have to say. I hope it is nothing very serious."

"It is the most serious thing that has ever happened to me," answered Thomas Willoughby, whose smile was for once absent; "and with your leave, Signor Pepe, I will come to your room with you where we shall be more free from interruption," and he nodded meaningfully in the direction of the landlady who was hovering close by under pretext of clearing a table.

I led the way up the narrow stairs, beginning to feel really anxious, for I had never heard my friend speak in

such a way before. Once inside my room I took out of my cupboard a tiny bundle of dry twigs, and placing them on the floor of the dark little landing just outside my door, I closed this and requested Thomas to unburden himself. He had eyed my manœuvre with the twigs with some curiosity and now asked me its meaning.

"It is to prevent the landlady from listening at the keyhole," I explained. "She is a good soul, but terribly afflicted with curiosity; and several times, when some client has been here dictating to me matter, perhaps of a delicate nature, for a letter, that same matter has been made public to my great annoyance and surprise; for I assure you that, until I discovered the author of the mischief, my own unsullied character for discretion suffered sadly. However, I caught her at the keyhole one day, and though she swore she was in the very act of knocking to give me a message when I suddenly opened the door, I knew better. Since then I always employ a bundle of twigs with the happiest result. You saw that the bundle rested upon the floor but was attached to the handle by a string. If she tries to take the bundle away the string rattles the handle and I hear her; if she does not suspect that my twigs are there, she treads on them, and then they snap and I am warned at once. At first the worry of making up bundles of twigs was dreadful; she crushed two or three a week quite flat; but now she is not nearly so troublesome, and the bundle I put out just now has lasted three months."

"I see," said Willoughby admiringly; "your plan is most ingenious; but wouldn't it have been less troublesome to change your lodgings?"

"My dear friend," I said sagely, "it is better to deal with the devil you know than with the devil you

don't know. If I went to another lodging the landlady there might not only repeat what she overheard, but a good deal more which she had never heard at all. But pray tell me what is the matter?"

Thomas threw himself into my easy chair,—a luxury, and the only one, to which I had treated myself out of my lottery-prize—and heaved a deep sigh.

"Come," I said encouragingly, "out with it! What's the matter? You had, if I remember rightly what you said below, a piece of news to tell, a confession to make, and my help to ask. You can begin with whichever you like, but pray begin."

"I'll take things in their order," he said with another sigh. "Well then, the news is that I am in love!"

I burst into a laugh, partly because his intense gravity somehow tickled me, and next because my fears of anything serious being amiss were instantly relieved. "Oh," I said, "is that all! Another Teresa, eh? Why did you make such a mystery about what you told me yourself happens regularly once a month? If that is your news, let us have the confession next."

"That's the worst part of it," sighed my poor friend, looking so really pained by my mirth that I hastened to compose my countenance; "that's the worst part of the whole thing. It is love with a capital L."

I put both my hands deep into my trousers' pockets and pursed up my mouth with a slight whistle; a position and an action which I am inclined to think belong to the English half of me, since I never saw a real Italian either assume the one or give vent to the other. Thomas Willoughby, I knew well by this time, was always in earnest, even in his amusements. If it was true that his present plight was caused by, as he put it, Love with a capital L, I felt quite sure that he

would never cease the pursuit of his object, in which with a pleasant anticipatory tingle of intrigue, I already felt myself involved.

"And how," I enquired slowly, "how do you wish me to help you?"

"Oh, you must manage the whole thing," he answered quite gravely. "Procure me an introduction, or procure me the means of procuring an introduction, and so forth; and then you must be best man at the wedding."

My head whirled. I procure him an introduction! I be best man at the wedding! What sort of a woman had he been smitten with, if I could serve him in either capacity? He surely could not be intending to make a fool of himself with anyone of the Bina Kovachich kind!

"And who, may I ask, is the lady?" I said.

"I don't know, Signor Pepe, and that is just the worst of it."

I positively jumped at his answer; what could he mean? "Are you quite sure you're not ill?" I enquired feeling really uneasy. "Have you got fever, or anything of that kind?"

"I am perfectly well, and perfectly aware of what I am saying," he answered seriously. "I do not know who the lady is, and it is to obtain that knowledge that I require your assistance. I have seen her several times, and though I have never yet been able to speak to her, though I do not know her name, nor where she comes from, nor even where she is living, yet I swear I will marry her, Signor Romagno."

I admire spirit in a young man, especially of this kind; it suits my southern blood, and I was pleased with Thomas Willoughby's confidence in me. "When did, or do, you see the lady?" I asked.

"Where you shall see her within the next hour, if you will come with

me," answered Thomas cheering up a little as I threw no cold water on his wild project. "Don't trouble to stay here for food; we'll dine at a restaurant in the town; just change your coat, if you want to, and come along. I knew you would help me."

"I did not say anything of the kind," I answered; "very probably I shall be quite unable to serve you in this matter. I can tell nothing till I know a little more about the circumstances of the case; but at any rate I should like to be shown your lady-love, Signor Willoughby."

"You shall see her," he answered confidently, "as I told you, within the next hour; and when you do see her——" he broke off abruptly, a pause of enthusiasm standing for things unspeakable.

CHAPTER VI.

My friend conducted me down the hill again to Soloporto, and hailing a passing carriage, ordered the driver to set us down at a certain point in Barcola.

Although the whole affair interested me not a little, and although my curiosity was raised to a still higher pitch by our destination, I forbore any question, considering that it would impair my dignity. This last attitude on my part will be recognised by the reader as also essentially English; for a real Italian is not only very inquisitive, but spares himself no trouble in satisfying, or trying to satisfy his curiosity, especially if it be of a personal nature. He will put a dozen questions while you are trying to frame an astute answer to one, and will go to far greater labour in his neighbour's affairs than in his own. Owing to this attitude in the general population of Soloporto, I anticipated little difficulty in finding out all the circumstances connected with Thomas Willoughby's *innamorata*. We had

driven along in silence for some time when my companion spoke.

"We are going to Barcola, Signor Romagno, in order to dine, and rest, and get cool. There is a little restaurant there where they give you very good fresh fish, and we can keep the carriage to return in after we have had dinner and a cigar."

"To return in!" I exclaimed; "why, I thought we were driving straight to a private view of your lady-love. When is she to be seen?"

"It is now past six," said Thomas, consulting his watch; "by eight o'clock, or a little after, we shall be in the *Armoria* theatre."

"The theatre!" I cried reproachfully. "Who in his senses wants to go to a theatre in August, the hottest month I do believe in the whole year? Besides, I hope this girl has nothing to do with the stage——"

I was glad to be interrupted by one of my friend's usual laughs, for hitherto he had maintained an extraordinary gravity. "Oh! so you thought I was going to make a fool of myself in that way, did you?" he said. "Signor Pepe, how often have I told you that I am the very soul of discretion,—when it suits me?" he concluded truthfully.

By this time we had reached the restaurant, which stood in a garden reached by stone steps from the road below; it was, in fact, a kind of gravelled terrace opposite the sea, shaded by a few old trees interlaced with vines trained beneath them over trellis-work, so as to form a continuous verdant roof. The indispensable oleander trees of a foreign restaurant were placed here and there in their usual green painted tubs, and their dusty looking foliage and almond-scented pink blossoms were very conspicuous among the vine-leaves, whose edges were cracked and curled by the fierce sunshine of a southern summer.

The place was very quiet, indeed I think we were the only people in it at the moment; but in another hour or so all those little white clothed tables would be full of light-hearted folk from the town, come out to Barcola in the heavily-loaded tram-cars to eat, drink, and be merry; and in his capacity for enjoyment I confess that, in my opinion, the foreigner has a considerable advantage over the Englishman. Give a Soloportese a plate of fried fish, a bit of crusty new bread, half a pint of cheap everyday wine; let him dispose of these in the open air, if possible in the vicinity of an oleander tree, which is sufficient to suggest to him a vivid idea of rural seclusion, and he will not only be entirely happy, but will return home quite convinced that the aforesaid conditions are the very acme of pleasure. If you can add three or four musicians playing popular melodies upon instruments which mark the progress of the evening by getting hourly more out of tune, the enviable inhabitant of Soloporto will feel himself yet more to be envied. He will clink glasses with his companions, talk eagerly about the merest trifle, grow excited and enthusiastic about anything or nothing, indulge in the tritest jokes, illustrate these with perpetual gesture and pantomime, clap loudly and without the slightest self-restraint at every pause in the music, the airs of which he often accompanies in a melodious and quite unstudied manner; he will, I say, do all these things, enjoy himself for four or five hours in the restaurant garden, and retrace his steps to his stuffy little room in town, having expended upon his evening's pleasure anything you like from sixpence to three times that sum.

The Soloportese has done all these things in entire unconsciousness of the scorn of the elderly Englishman at the

next table. This personage, accompanied by his wife or daughter, or perhaps by both, lays down his umbrella upon his arrival, and, assuming his gold eye-glasses, solemnly peruses the bill of fare presented by the white-aproned waiter, who ostentatiously re-polishes the heavy glasses on the table with the napkin that seems to be an invariable part of his coat-sleeve. After one or two impatient sniffs Paterfamilias hands the bill of fare over to his womankind, who are supposed to have learned foreign languages, and they in their turn having read the document remain in equal ignorance of its contents. They therefore chance the nature of the food by ordering those dishes which cost the most, and which must therefore be the best. Upon the same principle Papa orders a bottle of Vienna wine at two florins and a half, which immensely impresses the waiter, but deprives the Englishman of learning the charms of the vintage grown upon the mountain slopes close at hand, and retailed at sixpence a quart. When the first dish comes it proves to be fish, of a species which Papa finds fuller of bones than is usual with the finny tribe, and which Mamma nervously trusts is fresh, as stale fish in hot weather is frequently fatal. Being quite unable to ascertain if the water in the *carafe* is filtered none of the party dare touch it, and in consequence find the bottled wine a little heating on a warm evening. The chicken, which next appears, is pronounced tough, which is probably the case, but being, even in English estimation, of comparatively harmless substance, it is eaten with as good a grace as may be. By the time it is finished our Soloportese friend close by has begun his second song, which perhaps fortunately neither Papa, Mamma, nor their daughter understand. Its execution, however, is

suggestive, and Mamma treads upon Papa's toes under the table to call his attention to what she warned him would happen if he persisted in following the customs of the country and straying for even one meal beyond the propriety of a *table d'hôte*. Next comes the pudding, which would not be bad if it were a little less greasy ; and while this is being tasted, the singer hard by has begun an animated argument with the opposite reveller at his own table, having also put his arm round the waist of his pretty sweetheart sitting next him. The terrible position is perceived by Mamma, the corners of whose mouth droop disapprovingly as she impresses the adjoining iniquity upon Papa's favourite ear. Having hastily put up his eye-glasses and ascertained the cause of the agony in his left little toe, that gentleman glares for a moment over his right shoulder at his unconscious neighbour's back, and then, being desirous to retreat with dignity, he looks out over the sea and murmurs a condescending phrase or two about the beauty of the landscape and the fineness of the evening, which he hopes may divert his daughter's attention from the next table. Soon Mamma says they should be getting back to the hotel, and Papa pays the bill out of a whole handful of coins extracted laboriously from his pocket, bestowing a plentiful largess on the obsequious waiter. The English family has spent seven or eight florins, and not enjoyed itself at all ; indeed Mamma is not quite sure, as she lifts her skirts out of the dust, whether the place they have just quitted is "quite respectable," while Papa soothes his own misgivings in the same direction by an allusion to the light-heartedness of these southern peoples.

It must be understood that my sentiments, as above expressed, do

not in any way apply to Thomas Willoughby, who was certainly one of the most adaptable individuals I have ever known. On the present occasion he ordered the dinner and wine as if to the manner born, and I should really have enjoyed myself extremely had it not been for the restlessness of my companion, which was all the more trying because he endeavoured to conceal it. We rolled our cigarettes and sipped our wine, and Thomas fidgeted on his chair, and tore the bill of fare into tiny fragments, and broke the sticks of the burnt matches into little bits, and, in short, conducted himself in such a fidgety fashion that at last I suggested that we had better be going. He jumped up, paid the bill, and hurried me into the carriage so rapidly that I was quite breathless by the time we were once more on the road.

Shortly afterwards we found ourselves in one of the smaller theatres of Soloporto. It was sultry and hot in the streets, and the interior of this place of amusement was stifling. As a general rule none of the theatres were open during the really hot season, but an English Opera-Bouffe Company, having finished an engagement in some cooler part of the Austrian Empire, had been compelled to pass through Soloporto on their way to another professional engagement, and had halted for a couple of nights' performances. Rather to my surprise my companion had apparently not provided himself with a box, and we paid simply for the second-class seats in what corresponds to the English pit. Thomas Willoughby took a comprehensive look round the boxes already occupied : "She has not come yet," he observed.

"Perhaps she is not coming," I suggested, unamiable anxious to ruffle him a little ; for really the heat was very great, and I began to feel that a

considerable demand had been made upon my good-nature by a tiresome expedition which might very possibly prove barren. Soloporto was almost completely emptied of its wealthy and aristocratic families, who had, as was the custom, dispersed in all directions in search of a cooler climate ; and what few seats and boxes were taken contained chiefly the richer *bourgeois*, among whom, however, a few handsome faces were to be seen. I was growing more irritable and annoyed every moment, a state of mind to which my friend's cheerful demeanour contributed not a little, until at length the orchestra ceased its distressing sounds of tuning and getting up to pitch, the conductor tapped his desk with his white *bâton*, and the overture began. I cannot honestly say that at this moment I remember the name or nature of either the play or the music, except that neither was conspicuously above the common-place ; I did not even perceive the precise moment when the curtain rose, being occupied in watching the entrance of two ladies into a box upon the ground-tier, close enough to my seat to afford me a capital view of them. One was elderly and portly, with a gentle manner and a sweet, but rather insipid, face showing traces of bygone beauty ; her hair had been fair but was now faded ; her eyes had been blue, but the brightness of their colour was gone and they lacked expression ; her complexion, which must once have been of that pink and white order so fascinating in the very young, had paled to a neutral tint. Perhaps, however, I should not have noticed the old lady's appearance so closely had it not been for that of the young one who sat beside her, and for whom she served as a foil. She was a girl apparently about seventeen or eighteen years of age, a being in whom all the ripening charms of girlhood had met to produce

perfection. Her face was oval, her skin of that warm ivory colour that is leagues away from what are called waxen or olive complexions ; there was a lovely glow on her cheeks, and her small, exquisitely curved mouth was red as a pomegranate-bud ; her nose was delicately shaped, and her large dark eyes glowed brilliantly under the finely pencilled brows. The etiquette of most Soloporto theatres does not enforce evening dress, and therefore I could only guess at the lovely whiteness that must lie hidden beneath the lace falling back from this girl's beautiful throat. In hot weather all the Soloporto girls arrange their dress so as to leave uncovered that soft white curve that marks where the throat and chest meet, and this girl had so far followed the fashion ; but I could see with half an eye that the peerless creature was no Soloportese. Every woman in the town is pretty, but the prevalent type of beauty lacks refinement, and that indescribable attraction which results from what is called breeding,—a quality which it was evident to me this girl possessed in a high degree. I gazed, quite oblivious of what was passing on the stage ; and then, seeing a subtle but quite perceptible look of recognition dawn upon the beauty's face as her eyes wandered to some spot near me, I hastily turned to Thomas Willoughby, whose existence I had entirely forgotten, to ask him if his lady-love could match this flawless creature.

Before I could open my mouth he spoke, with a certain nervous eagerness which he tried to pass off beneath half bantering words. "She is very lovely, isn't she ?" he said.

"Is that," I began—

He nodded. "Yes, Signor Pepe, that is the lady. Do you wonder I am in earnest ?"

I did not in the least. The wonder to me would have been that he could

have been half-hearted about such a damsel.

"I mean to marry that girl," said my friend, his mouth taking a more determined line, and a look of reckless daring beginning to dawn in his eyes. Having already noticed that the stranger had recognised my companion as someone she had seen before, I took another peep at her to see if she was aware of Thomas's exceedingly becoming expression which made him handsomer than usual. Women's perceptions are marvellous, as is likewise their power of conveying or concealing them; I could have sworn that the Englishman had made a favourable impression. As I looked at this very exceptional couple, and realised that on the one side at any rate love had taken firm root, while on the other its seed had been sown, I felt my very heart's pulses throb faster with interest and the blood in my veins course more quickly; and I took a solemn vow to promote my friend's cause by every means in my power, nor, though the path we had to follow proved devious and difficult, did I, as you shall presently see, ever swerve from my purpose.

As we continued to sit in our places,—I cannot say that our presence in the theatre had any closer relation to the performance—I began to revolve many plans in my mind, one of the first of which was a scheme for finding out the beautiful girl's name, of which my friend had confessed his complete ignorance. He was not so well used to the ways of Soloporto as I was, or he would, I fancied, have found little difficulty in the discovery, for in all Europe there does not exist so perfect a force of detectives, spies, intriguers, enquirers and so forth as the *Servi di Piazza* (*Corps de Commissionnaires*) of Soloporto. Do you desire to know what interests your friend in a particular neighbourhood? Do not ask him;

he might lie; pay a *servo di piazza*, and unless your friend suspects something (which is hardly likely) and fees your man still higher, you can find out all you want. Do you desire an introduction to one of the elegant little dressmakers who do here abound? Go to a *servo di piazza*. Do you want to know who dined or supped in such and such a house, and what was said of you there? Go to a *servo di piazza*; he will gossip with the cook, who will ask the butler, and your information will be forthcoming. If you want to deal, as is very much the fashion in Soloporto, that stab in the dark which is called an anonymous letter, you send it by a *servo di piazza*, who says, as he delivers it, that it was given to him by a person whom he met casually in the street, and who paid him to deliver it at once. Ah, they are as useful a set of rascals as is to be found anywhere, those *servi di piazza* of Soloporto!

I had come across several of the fraternity in the course of business, and now resolved to at once set enquiries on foot about the lady with whom Willoughby had fallen in love. I was just weighing in my mind the varying claims to discretion of two or three *servi*, when, to my surprise, the performance came to a close, and Thomas jumped up with considerable alacrity. And now the reason of our sitting in the cheap ground-floor seats became apparent. We got out much more quickly than those occupying the boxes could possibly do, and thus gained the door by which they must emerge, and planting ourselves in the street outside rendered it impossible that anyone could leave the theatre without our seeing them.

The usual small crowd of idlers had gathered outside, mostly of the poorer classes, and there were one or two *servi di piazza* about also, one of whom I slightly knew. Before the exit door of the boxes a handsome

carriage and pair had drawn up, a hooded victoria with only a coachman, and no footman waiting with whom I might try to have a word. At the moment this occurred to me the ladies passed out, very close to us. Thomas, of course, had assumed the position of honour nearest to the door, and I had at first been at his side, a little further away, when it suddenly struck me that it was impossible to say whether the old or the young lady would take the right or left of the door if they walked abreast. A few seconds before they came into sight therefore I carelessly crossed over opposite to my companion, but fortune as usual favoured him, and in more ways than one; the beautiful girl paused for an almost imperceptible second so that her companion slightly preceded her, and then, with head proudly poised and dark eyes flashing as she looked straight in front of her, I saw her hand steal from her side, meet another hand, and leave something within it, something upon which that other hand at once closed; the next second she was following her chaperon into the carriage, but her movements were not so quick but that I missed the crimson rose she had been wearing in the theatre.

I did not congratulate my friend upon what I had noticed, though if he had been an Italian I should probably have said "*Milli felicitazioni, caro,*" or something of that kind; as he was an Englishman I kept my ideas to myself, and did not even betray the fact that I had seen anything. While he lit a cigarette I began to talk to the *servo di piazza* I had noticed.

"Carlo," I said, "you saw the carriage and pair that has just driven away with two ladies?" He nodded. "I will give you a handsome present if you——"

Carlo interrupted me with a laugh. "My most amiable Signor Pepe, I know exactly what you are going to

say, but it is of no use. Do you suppose your friend there [he nodded towards Thomas who still lingered, smoking, on the other side of the door] is the only young gentleman in Soloperto who wants to know all about a certain young lady?" I felt a little startled, for somehow, odd as it seemed, the idea of a rival or even rivals had not occurred to me. "I should have been a rich man to-night, Signor Pepe," the fellow went on, "if I had been able to earn all that has been offered to me on the same subject; but one good turn deserves another [I had once mended Carlo's boots for him when he was too poor to pay me], and I can, in a couple of seconds, tell you all that is known in Soloperto about that young lady. She and her aunt are staying with the old woman to whom the carriage belongs, Countess Wippach. The aunt is unwell and has to remain at home, so her hostess, to amuse her visitor, has brought her several times to the theatre. No one knows where the aunt and niece are going, though I am told they are passing through Soloperto on their return to some Italian town where they live, after a tour in the north. The Countess calls both her visitors by their Christian names; no letters have come for them since their arrival; they brought no maid with them, and their linen is only marked with initials; no visitors have been received at the Countess's *campagna* since the coming of these two strangers, nor has anyone been invited to go there. There is a big red M painted on their luggage. They are——"

"But all this is beside the mark, Carlo," I interrupted. "What is the name?"

"Ah! whether by accident or on purpose that is just what they have made it impossible to find out," said Carlo.

"But the Christian name," I said eagerly.

"The old aunt, who is frightful and has a red nose, is called Bianca," answered Carlo; "the girl is Iridé."

Here was at any rate something definite. I thanked Carlo, and hurried after Thomas Willoughby, who, seeing me engaged, had trotted off down the street. "Well?" he said interrogatively, as I came up with him.

"Her name is Iridé," I said; and then I proceeded to put him in possession of everything that Carlo had told me.

"This sounds a little difficult," he said rather gravely.

"I call it very difficult," I rejoined.

"But the difficulty adds rather to the pleasure," he continued.

"I'm not so sure about that," said I.

"Where is this *campagna* where the old Countess lives?" he asked.

I described its position to him as well as I could; it was situated at a considerable distance from the town, and the whole property was well walled, and difficult of access for

entire strangers, unless they could procure an introduction. "But that will be difficult," I concluded, "for the Countess is old and very particular, and you have not the ghost of an excuse I fear for presenting yourself. If you like, I will try to get speech with one of the servants myself, to find out if anything has been said as to the destination of the visitors. I can take a pair of boots there that I have mended, and ask if they belong to anyone in the house."

When we parted that night Thomas Willoughby and I had concocted a plan whereby I was, by means of the boot-fiction, to introduce myself into the Countess's establishment, and find out at any rate the day and hour of the visitors' departure, which I should communicate to my friend. He would have a spy near the booking-office to take note of the place for which the tickets were issued, and Thomas, who was to be waiting near, would hurry up and take a ticket to the same place. After that, we concluded something must happen to betray the identity of the beautiful unknown.

(*To be continued.*)

A ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY FOR IRELAND.

LIBERALISM in religion has been defined by Cardinal Newman to be the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion ; that one creed is as good as another, and that in all religious systems there is to be found by the earnest seeker not a little of good. In a word, Liberalism is inconsistent with the recognition of any religion as true.

This movement has gained immense strength on the continent of Europe, where it has been seen to result in bald infidelity. In England its growth has been checked by many influences unfelt abroad ; still, it is to be traced in the hydra-headed Dissent that flourishes among us, which is alleged to be its logical consequence.

The opponents of the Establishment have ever sought to dissolve the union that has existed from the earliest times between Church and State in this country. Religion, they say, must not meddle with the affairs of the State. The secular education of the nation is, pre-eminently, the concern of the State. To any scheme of State, or national, education, therefore, which may be accepted by them, provision for religious instruction cannot be admitted.

Liberalism first obtained authoritative recognition in education by the establishment and endowment of the London University in the year 1827. A local habitation was provided for that institution by the erection of the magnificent pile of buildings in Gower Street. The immediate circumstance responsible for that development is said to have been the publication in the Press of a letter dealing with the subject of popular

University education by Thomas Campbell. Those, however, who desire to learn the true cause must go a little deeper in their investigations. They will find that the new institution was founded in response to the demands of the crescent spirit of Liberalism, the chief exponents of which, at that epoch, were Lord Brougham and the powerful Whig Party. The new University was viewed with unfeigned horror by the Church Party. They regarded its establishment as the complete triumph of Liberalism, and a menace to all dogmatic teaching, as in fact it was. At once, therefore, they set about to checkmate the objects of its promoters, and in the following year, by the united efforts of the Church Party and the Tories, King's College in the Strand was founded. Pursuant to a compromise effected later on between the rival establishments, the former ceased to call itself a university, and became a college affiliated to a university chartered by the Government and styled the London University ; an *Alma Mater* which included King's College also under its jurisdiction, but from which was excluded absolutely all religious or dogmatic teaching.

In Ireland the earliest public recognition of Liberalism in education was the establishment, by Lord Grey and the Whigs, of a comprehensive scheme of national education. The details were elaborated by the late Sir Alexander MacDonnell, and it remains to the present day with some trifling necessary modifications. At first this new system encountered the sturdy opposition of the Protestant and Roman

Catholic clergy alike. But in course of time the undeniable advantages to be derived from the establishment in a poor country of practically free schools, the payment of substantial sums of Imperial money, either by way of free grants for school buildings and requisites, or in grants for results awarded upon a liberal scale, became manifest. Soon the active hostility of the rectors and parish priests ceased, and they, for the time being at least, accepted and took advantage of the scheme of education provided by Government for their flocks, although objectionable, rather than have none at all. But the priests were never reconciled to this godless system, as they called it. Rome had never approved of it. And this conclusion is irresistible when we view the numerous and increasing Christian Brothers and Convent schools that have been organised all over the country since then. They are a most important element in primary education in Ireland at the present day, and certainly furnish an enduring protest by the Roman Catholic Church against mixed education.

The next advance of Liberalism in Ireland is seen in the creation of the three Queen's Colleges and the Queen's University. Prompted by the same considerations that led to the passing of the Roman Catholic Emancipation Act, and encouraged by the apparent acceptance, by the priests, of the new scheme of primary education, Sir Robert Peel and the Government of the day resolved that some provision should be made to place the full benefits of University education within the reach of Irish Roman Catholics. To give effect to this determination they looked to Trinity College and Dublin University. But the scholarships and other prizes there were not yet open to Roman Catholics, although members of that communion were as free to

matriculate, and proceed to the higher degrees, as their Protestant brethren. Public opinion, however, was not yet strong enough to compel the Board and Senate to open their portals still wider. The Government, therefore, had no option but to establish the Queen's Colleges, which, for convenience, were located in Belfast, Cork, and Galway. Later on Lord Clarendon incorporated the Queen's University as the degree-giving authority, to which the Queen's Colleges were then affiliated.

The Queen's Colleges were more in harmony with the idea of an *Alma Mater* than the kindred institutions in Gower Street and the Strand, because the keeping of certain terms, by residence and lectures, was made obligatory on students before they could proceed to degrees in any faculty. To make the new Colleges attractive and useful they were liberally endowed with scholarships and prizes, and fully equipped with all the apparatus, of latest and most approved design, requisite to carry on the work of University education. But religion was as rigidly excluded from the *curriculum* as from that of its prototype in Gower Street. Nevertheless, the Queen's Colleges were considered by many, competent to give an opinion in the matter, to afford a means of higher education adequate to the needs of Roman Catholics. This was not the attitude of Rome, however; and, shortly after their foundation Pope Gregory the Sixteenth had the Queen's Colleges under consideration, with a view to devise some means whereby to counteract the spread of infidelity, which, it was believed, must inevitably result from the exclusion of the subject of religion from the appointed collegiate course. In short, these deliberations led to the solemn resolve to erect a University in Ireland from whose

course the elements of revealed religion would not be wholly excluded. There was another, and more cogent reason, however, for the establishment of the Roman Catholic University, to which I shall refer later on. But Gregory died before this decision was promulgated from the chair of St. Peter, and the political struggles that convulsed Italy shortly afterwards, resulting in the temporary banishment of his successor Pope Pius the Ninth, forced the question for a time into the background. On the return of the latter Pontiff from exile, however, the question came again to the forefront of Papal politics. A rescript on the subject had been addressed to the archbishops as early as 1846, but action thereon was suspended until 1850, when Dr. Cullen, the new Primate and Apostolic Delegate to Ireland, was charged with taking the necessary steps to give effect to the decision of the Holy See.

It is said that the Irish bishops, in furthering this project, acted in obedience to Rome rather than in concurrence with it. The evils of mixed education, urged at Rome, had not at that time presented themselves to the minds of the Irish hierarchy. But as a strong and imperious prelate like Dr. (afterwards Cardinal) Cullen, had been commanded to formulate the scheme, with which he was also in fullest sympathy, the bishops had necessarily to obey. Nor could the pious work of founding the proposed institution have been committed to more competent hands than those of Cardinal Cullen. Taken from the head of his College at Rome, which had received him a poor boy half a century previously, and which he had now governed with conspicuous ability for many years, fully endorsing the Roman view against mixed education, possessed by an indomitable will

and consuming zeal, he was eminently fitted for the task, to perform which he had moreover been invested with extraordinary ecclesiastical powers. As might be expected, all passive opposition was soon abated, and in a synod held at Thurles the Irish archbishops and bishops formally, and with apparent unanimity, resolved that a Roman Catholic University should be forthwith established.

At this time it happened that Dr. Newman was the rising light in the Roman Catholic Church. His social position, his culture, his reputation as a scholar and a prominent member of the great University of Oxford, and the fact that he had seceded from the Anglican Communion to the Church of Rome, all combined to render him a *persona grata* at the Vatican. The eyes of the Roman Catholic world were for the moment turned upon him. To Dr. Newman, therefore, Dr. Cullen naturally looked for assistance in this most important and formidable undertaking. But there was a further and weightier reason which singled Newman out as well qualified to put into execution the design of Rome. This will more clearly appear when we inquire what was the Papal policy underlying the foundation of the proposed University. As already said, there was a further and more cogent reason than that alleged. No reasonable doubt can be entertained that the view was not merely to establish a University in Ireland which would be accessible to the Roman Catholic youth of that island without endangering the stability of their faith. The policy of the Pope was much more astute and comprehensive. The real view was to found in Ireland a vast Roman Catholic teaching institution, in which all secular education would be subordinated to the dogmatic teaching of Rome; a centre absolutely free

from the contaminating influences of Continental infidelity, and to which not only Irish youths would be confidently invited, but those from England, America, and the Colonies. That this is a correct statement of the Roman policy would further appear from the fact that, at Dr. Cullen's suggestion, Newman contemplated a tour in America, to be extended to the Colonies if successful, in order to prepare the minds of Roman Catholics resident in those distant lands for the projected University. Circumstances did not permit him to carry out this intention; but there can be no doubt that the scheme was put prominently before the faithful in those countries as a great Catholic work, and consequently the appeal for financial aid was liberally responded to. In the United States alone the contributions amounted to a sum of over £16,000. Even the education of students from the Continent, from France, Belgium, and Poland, entered into the purview of this very far-reaching project. In other words, the proposed University was the execution of a politic and clever move, to establish in Ireland a Propaganda for the spread of Roman Catholicism, the counterpart of the Propaganda of the Faith at Rome, whither would be sent, for spiritual nurture, the Roman Catholic youth from all English-speaking countries. It would rival Protestant Oxford, which, as yet, was absolutely closed to Roman Catholics. It was not until after the passing of the Act of 1854 that Oxford was empowered to grant its degrees to such, provided they had been previously able to obtain admission into one of its Colleges, from many of which they were, however, still excluded. The Vatican considered Ireland to be the proper seat for such a University. It claimed that that country had ever been associated with

its tenets. The faith of its people had sustained, directly, very little damage from the shock of the Reformation that wrought such havoc in the sister isle. The scepticism and impatience of control in religious affairs, so prevalent in all Continental cities, had not made its appearance in the large towns of Ireland. As yet, happily, the altar and the confessional continued to be the paramount forces in the life of at least the majority of its inhabitants.

The supreme importance, therefore, of securing the services of Newman in connection with the proposed University was obvious. He was the recognised head, or at least one of the leaders, of the Tractarian movement, which had already resulted in great gain to Rome, and from which much more was anticipated. He exerted a great personal influence in the social life of his University, nor was that influence confined to the band of enthusiastic seceders, or to the English Roman Catholics with whom they daily came in contact. His personality was extended to scores of Anglicans, men of culture, of birth, and of serious character; alike to men who were still firmly attached to the Church of England, and to those who at that time were openly coqueting with Rome, but who were less courageous than the distinguished band that Newman had already led there. To many the prospects of a national apostasy from the principles of the Reformation were very brilliant. Devout Roman Catholics, who never dreamed of the possibility of the Rationalistic reaction that followed, saw, in the first crop of secessions, the droppings of a belated Pentecostal shower, and they prayed with energy that its fructifying effect would result in a yield of sixty or an hundred-fold. Among most uncompromising Protestants there were

entertained grave apprehensions of wholesale gain by Rome. This desired consummation would, doubtless, be expedited by putting at the head of the new scheme of education the former leader of the advanced Anglicans. It would, further, be viewed as a gracious act on the part of Rome, and an earnest of the marks of confidence and favour to be bestowed in the future upon men who had faith to make such sacrifices for her.

It was for these reasons that Newman was selected to formulate the working details of the new University. On the 12th of November, 1851, he was formally and unanimously elected Rector by the Catholic University Committee, to whom he, of course, had been previously recommended, and two days later he formally accepted that position. It may here be observed, as an extraordinary fact, that it was not until Whit Sunday, the 4th of June, 1854, that he was officially installed by Archbishop Cullen in the Pro-Cathedral in Marlboro' Street, Dublin. This delay was unaccountable to him, and to the day of his death was never explained.

That Newman fully appreciated the ideal position soon became manifest. He considered that the academic atmosphere of Oxford was noxious to the faith of Roman Catholics; even the general tone of society there was baneful. There is little doubt that he endeavoured to persuade the authorities of the Church to prohibit Roman Catholic parents from sending their sons to a seat of learning, the environments of which were so pernicious. This was a very strong step, and had it then been adopted by the English Roman Catholic bishops would have resulted in many finding their way to the Irish University; probably the additional support the latter would have thus secured may

have, in some measure, prompted Newman's action. He was unsuccessful, however, as it was not until 1865, more than six years after Newman had resigned the Rectorship, that Oxford was authoritatively prohibited to Roman Catholics. Indeed it is clear, from letters written by Newman at that time, that he would never have accepted the appointment of Rector had it not been the definite intention that the proposed University was to be created for the benefit, not merely of Irish Roman Catholics, but of all English-speaking people of that faith. With this end in view he strongly protested against the proposals, made by the English bishops in 1855, to found a Hall at Oxford for the reception of exclusively Roman Catholic students. Such a course would manifestly have attracted to Oxford not only all the sons of English Roman Catholics, but the sons of all Roman Catholic parents, resident in Ireland and elsewhere, who could command sufficient means to enable them to send their children to be educated at, and share the prestige of, that great University. He even went so far as to threaten to resign if the bishops persisted in their intention to establish the proposed Hall.

The first act of Newman on his appointment as Rector was to select a colleague in whose judgment and on whose sympathetic assistance he might implicitly rely, and whom he might recommend to the Archbishop for appointment as Vice-Rector. His choice rested, without hesitation, upon his old college friend, Dr. Manning. The prestige that would accrue to the new University by securing Dr. Manning's services appeared to him immense. He was a seceder from the English Church, like Newman, endowed with a deeply religious mind, and possessed of equal culture and influence. But besides these indispens-

able qualities he had a further recommendation that Newman sadly lacked. Manning was emphatically a man of the world. Rapid in action, he at the same time exhibited in all his movements a nimbleness of mind and a degree of astuteness that almost amounted to craft. This unique combination of qualities in the man had long been recognised, and it recommended him to Newman, who confidently hoped not only to obtain the active and earnest co-operation of Manning, but the help of many other distinguished seceders. However, whether, as a result of the great foresight accredited to him, Dr. Manning perceived that Newman's work contained inherent difficulties which he regarded as insurmountable, or whether he fancied (a not impossible supposition) that Providence destined him to play a more prominent part on the stage of Papal politics than filling a minor rôle in the organisation of an institution, albeit of lofty aspirations, the success of which was, to say the least of it, problematical, can never be ascertained. Suffice it to say, he declined the proffered post without very much hesitation, giving, in a letter to Newman, as his reason, the fact that he was resolved not to commit himself to one work more than another, until he had learned the wishes of the Pope, at an audience to be accorded to him later on.

Although Manning's refusal was a tremendous blow to Newman, he nevertheless continued to make the necessary arrangements that devolved upon him. In conjunction with the Archbishop of Cashel and another, he drew up a report on the organisation of the proposed University, founded mainly on the lines of the University of Louvain, in Belgium, the pattern sanctioned in the rescript already adverted to. This report was generally

approved by the Committee on the 12th of November, 1851, and it was settled that the new University was to consist of four Faculties: (1) Arts, Letters, and Science, (2) Medicine, (3) Law, (4) Theology. It was proposed to begin with the first named Faculty, and to leave the arrangement of the studies of the others to a later period. Of these the most pressing was the second. Great stress was laid on the importance of a Medical School. In a Catholic country, it was said, there was an imperative call for Catholic practitioners. In the most important events of human life medicine and religion are confronted, and whether they co-operate or collide depends on whether or not they are reconciled the one to the other. The doctor proves the most valued support or the most painful embarrassment to the parish priest, according as he professes or abjures the Catholic faith. The need of a School of Medicine was, therefore, urgent, but until the Arts course was in operation it could not be supplied. The government was to be in the hands of the Rector and Vice-Rector, appointed by the Episcopal Body; the Rector to appoint deans of discipline, a secretary, and a bursar. Professors and lecturers were to be appointed by the archbishops on the recommendation of the Rector. The professors of each Faculty were authorised to elect out of their own body their own deans and secretaries. The duty of each dean was to convoke and preside over the sessional meeting of his Faculty, when the sessional programme should be drawn up subject to the approval of the Rector. The deans of Faculties were to form the Rectorial Council, who would assist the Rector with their advice in all matters of studies. The Academic Senate should consist of Rector, Vice-Rector, Secretary of

the University, and the professors of the several Faculties. It would be entrusted with the determination of graver matters, such as the framing of statutes, and any other extraordinary subject which the Rector might refer to its consideration.

Such, in outline, was the scheme of the new University; but the position assigned in its constitution to the inculcation of the Roman Catholic religion shows clearly that it was virtually established with the object of spreading the dogmas of Roman Catholicism, and bringing about a Catholic Renascence. It was laid down therein, as a condition of supreme moment, that all academic instruction should be in harmony with the principles of the Catholic religion. All the officers and professors were to be required to make a profession of the Catholic faith according to the form of Pope Pius the Fourth. The work put upon them was more onerous than would be involved by the most conscientious discharge of the duties of their respective chairs. They were to be zealous propagandists as well. In addition to delivering their professorial lectures, they were to create a national Catholic literature; to write philosophic treatises in defence of Catholicism; to compile school-books and books of general instruction for the children of Catholics in the United Kingdom, the British Empire, and America. Such books would be printed in the University Press, then contemplated, and their use, doubtless, enjoined by Papal sanction.

Only professors of eminence in their respective domains could be expected to accomplish this great work. It was decided, therefore, to have on the professorial staff only men of the best and most widely-known repute for a combination of learning and piety, professors who, while sincerely de-

voted to Catholicism, were possessed of reputations sufficient to command the deference and confidence of the world in their respective departments of learning. The students were to be divided into groups, consisting of not more than twenty in number. It was appointed that each group should live in a collegiate house, herein following the expedient resorted to by the two great English Universities in the Middle Ages, when Inns or Halls were formed which developed into the affiliated Colleges of our day. Every house should be controlled by a priest, appointed by the archbishops, who, in addition to being responsible for the discipline of the houses and the religious deportment of the students, would in turn serve daily Mass in the Community Chapel. According to the rules, each student should be required upon the first day of the session to furnish to the head of his house the name of his confessor. He was also required to attend University High Mass, and such other devotions as the head of his house might appoint. Lucrative exhibitions or prizes were part of the scheme, but it was made an imperative condition that the holders of such honourable emoluments should also exercise certain functions, such as holding the place of sacristan, serving at Mass, &c. Indeed, to such lengths was this principle of absolute control pushed, that it was even proposed to obtain from the Crown a patent for a theatre, under ecclesiastical control, whither the students might resort for recreation. Indeed, this principle of human control over all human action consumed the first Rector. Possibly he saw the necessity of it from a view of the evolutions of his own extraordinary mind, for to probe, to search, to inquire, was life itself to Newman; and it is said that it was only to escape the total apostasy of his

brother that he at length submitted his fearless questionings to be for ever silenced by the dogmas of an Infallible Church.

But above all things Newman desired to establish a National University church. The reasons he gave for its desirability were manifold. It would be the best possible advertisement for the University at the least possible cost. It would symbolise the indissoluble union between philosophy and religion, which was the great principle of the University. It would provide a means for the execution of formal acts, the giving of degrees, solemn lectures, and so forth. It would be a hall to be used for the weekly display of authority, and ennobled by the exhibition of religious symbols with which it would be furnished. It could not fail to attract the interest both of clergy and laity, whether Protestant or Catholic, as it was proposed that the preachers should from time to time be men of particular eminence gathered from all parts. Especially, he proposed that confessionalists for the students should be provided in the church, and that a religious confraternity should be founded, to afford opportunity for the cultivation of particular devotions.

For these and other reasons Newman considered a University church essential to the fulfilment of the great design. In fact, his own idea was to establish in Dublin, in connection with the University, a church formed on the lines of the Temple church in London. He always regarded the position of the Master of the Temple as the greatest for the exertion of a powerful influence on current events, political, social, or religious. The keenest and most refined intellects sat at his feet Sunday after Sunday, upon whom an able man could, and must of necessity in course of time, impress his views of life. Such an

audience already awaited Newman in Dublin. There the Irish Bar had its seat and was famous for the number and standing of its members; they all lived moreover in a comparatively limited area, and, therefore, were not subject to the disadvantage of their brethren in London, who in most cases resided at long distances from the Temple church. The medical profession of Ireland, also, was largely resident there, besides many members of the other learned professions. Not confident, however, that his own preaching powers would prove sufficiently attractive, he proposed that his pulpit should be filled by a succession of preachers, of such mental calibre as would not fail to draw thinking men of every class and creed. In this way he hoped to impress an indelible and militant Roman Catholic tone on Irish society. A University church was founded: it was formally opened by a solemn function on the 1st of May, 1856, and exists at the present time. Previously, on the feast of St. Malachy, the 3rd of November, 1854, the books of the University were opened for the reception of the names of the students.

Such were the aims and character of the University, the organisation of which was entrusted to Newman, and such the means adopted to render it successful. But has it succeeded? It has now been in existence for well nigh half a century, and I do not think it would be unfair, or discourteous to say that it has failed to accomplish any one of the aims of its founders. Abroad it is absolutely unknown, save in Rome. In England, of those interested in education, there are not many who are aware of its existence. In Ireland, indeed even in Dublin, where it has its seat, it has absolutely failed to attract, in any numbers, the class for whom it was ostensibly founded. Nor has it made the faintest impres-

sion on the tone of Irish society. That it had failed at any rate to fulfil Newman's ideal was fully recognised by him before he severed his connection with it in 1858, for he candidly gave as his reason for resigning, the fact that his hopes of the University being English as well as Irish were at an end.

This lack of success cannot be wholly attributed to any one cause. The considerable difficulties which were encountered during the first two years of its existence, its comparatively scanty endowment, the shock of Newman's resignation, the throwing open of the scholarships and other prizes of Trinity College to Roman Catholics,—all these things no doubt in their degree tended to failure. Want of funds however cannot be strongly urged, since no less than £80,000 and upwards was voluntarily subscribed for its foundation. This sum was not disproportionate when it is remembered that the total outlay on the three Queen's Colleges was but £375,000, which included the cost of the erection of vast and expensive buildings.

But there was one cause chiefly to which the failure may be traced, the inexorable economic law of demand and supply. There was no real educational necessity for such an institution; and the hour for erecting a Propaganda in Ireland had not yet arrived, if, indeed, its advent could ever have reasonably been looked for. The dangers to which the faith of students is said to be exposed in a university excluding religious teaching are fanciful, unsubstantial, a mere figment of the priest; and the strongest evidence of this is the failure attendant upon Newman's University, the very bulwark raised to afford that faith the necessary protection. If there were any real grounds for apprehension, they would assuredly have

been appreciated by the Roman Catholic laity of Ireland, ever vigilant and dutiful champions of the Church, who in such circumstances would sooner have let their sons go illiterate than receive their education at Trinity College and the Queen's College. Yet year after year numbers of Roman Catholic students are enrolled on the books of Trinity College, and go to swell the list of her graduates; it is a matter of notoriety that some of the most faithful and distinguished members of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland are *alumni* of that College. Surely in the face of this it cannot be seriously urged that Trinity College is dangerous to faith and morals. The same state of things exists in all the Queen's Colleges, especially that at Cork, the students of which are almost wholly recruited from the Roman Catholic population.

It only now remains for me to point my moral. Demands for the appropriation of public funds to establish a well-endowed university in Ireland, which could be accepted by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, have been made upon successive Governments for some years past. The prospects of the success of this movement were never more hopeful than at the present time. Mr. Balfour's speech on the subject during the last session of Parliament was, to say the least of it, most conciliatory, if indeed he did not actually pledge himself personally to the project; and although it was not received with any enthusiasm by his supporters, either above or below the gangway there was certainly a noticeable absence of any marked manifestation of disapproval. But was Mr. Balfour well advised on behalf of the Government in extending this veiled encouragement? Had he estimated the cost its fulfilment must involve? The Roman Catholic Church is nothing if not conservative. Her aims are con-

stant as the poles ; they know no variation, and her policy, therefore, which was patent to all men forty years ago, is unchanged to-day. A Roman Catholic university must, of necessity, be a Propaganda bitterly hostile, and, from its point of view, rightly hostile, to the doctrines of the Reformation, which at any rate form the basis of the religion of this country and are still established by law. Is the present Conservative Government, the most powerful of the century and supported by the whole strength of the Church of England, prepared gratuitously to give effect to a movement the objects of which are repugnant to the vast majority of their supporters and to the whole English nation, and upon which, if they went to the country to-morrow, they would sustain a tremendous defeat ? The demand is made, for the most part, by their avowedly irreconcileable foes. Is this Government, then, so disinterested as to be prepared not only to turn the unsmitten cheek to its adversaries, but itself to strike the blow ? All Protestants

openly profess that their faith is very dear to them, to many dearer than life itself. How can they, therefore, reasonably, not to say conscientiously, lend themselves to any project that would have the effect of furthering Ultramontanism, whose unwearying aim is the absorption, or, failing that, the extinction of all other creeds ? How, I ask, can any Protestant approve of such a suicidal policy ?

This is a frank statement of one view that is taken of this question, and that the popular view. Call it old-fashioned, call it narrow, call it even bigoted ; heap scorn upon it, pelt it with sneers, if you will. But it none the less remains to be reckoned with, the only logical view that can be taken by Protestants of any shade of thought, or by the bulk of the Unionist Party. Nay, more, it is the view held by the great English nation ; and this is the difficulty that will confront the Government if they attempt to legislate in the direction indicated. Happily this very difficulty may be trusted to work their salvation.

F. ST. JOHN MORROW.

THE PROMOTION OF JOHN JOHNSON.

On January 1st, 1877, Her Majesty Queen Victoria was proclaimed at Delhi Empress of India. The assumption of the title was made the occasion for honours and rewards in India, and naturally the Army serving in the country came in for its share. A medal was struck to commemorate the event, and every commanding officer was desired to select a man in his regiment to whom this medal was to be presented. No exact conditions were laid down as to the qualifications of the recipients, but it was clearly understood that a combination of the best qualities of a soldier was necessary to secure the coveted distinction.

Probably, if the 113th Foot had been desired to vote on the subject, it would never have occurred to a single man in the battalion to suggest for the honour any name but that of the Sergeant-Major, John Johnson. "I'm glad of this chance of recognising Johnson's services," said the Colonel simply, on reading his instructions; and the officers who were in the orderly room at the time, receiving the remark as a matter of course, merely answered, "Yes, Sir, it's most opportune," or words to that effect.

Accordingly there was a great full-dress parade, and special accommodation was reserved at the saluting flag for Mrs. Sergeant-Major and the little Johnsons. And a great parade it was, according to the lights of those days. The battalion stamped over every square inch of the ground, which had been flagged off for the purpose, some twelve or thirteen times. They marched up and down, and forwards and backwards, and side-ways and end-ways,

until the chaplain's sister-in-law (a Girton girl who had come out for the cold weather) grew so confused that she asked if a practical example of permutations and combinations was in progress. Nor was the band forgotten, and its dexterous agility came in for as much commendation as its musical skill. It played in front and behind and at the side of the column, changing its position with marvellous rapidity and never getting run over, though it appeared to have many hairbreadth escapes; so much so indeed that an enthusiastic spectator remarked that, with the exception of a carriage-dog jumping at the nose of a horse in a crowded thoroughfare, it was the cleverest performance he had ever seen. Finally the last possibility in the way of a military evolution was accomplished and the battalion was drawn up forming three sides of a square opposite the saluting flag. Then the Colonel desired Sergeant-Major Johnson to step to the front, and Sergeant-Major Johnson stepped accordingly. The Colonel was not in the habit of making speeches, and the enterprising reporter, who took down his few direct words, found it necessary to embellish them considerably before serving them up for the journal which he represented. But in those days the art of making speeches, that is to say speeches that can be either quoted *verbatim* or entirely explained away, was not considered to be a necessary accomplishment for officers commanding regiments. The trick of playing to the gallery, invented by the actor and improved on by the parson and the politician, was then unknown to the soldier. So the

Colonel presented the medal and made his few remarks, and while the reporter was busy expanding them, the men stood rapt and breathless, though there was a visible quiver in the muscles of the Sergeant-Major's face and Mrs. Johnson was sobbing audibly by the flag.

"Three minutes and a half, dear," said the Colonel's wife that evening to him in reply to a question he had asked her. "Good gracious," said the Colonel, "was I as long as that? Well, if ever I have to make a speech again"—then he strolled over to the mess forming severe resolutions to restrain his loquacity in future.

Neither as a type nor as an individual does John Johnson exist to-day. He had entered the service at a time when a man was ordered to be a pawn and not taught to consider himself a unit; and this was practically still the state of affairs in 1877. He was not merely a child of the regiment (for he had been born in it), but he was in fact a child of the Army. During his forty-four years of existence his world had always come to an abrupt termination at the barrack-gate; nor was the whole of the area within the barrack-walls known to him. Naturally the officers' mess was a place without the range of his practical experience; but there are few sergeant-majors to-day who are unacquainted with the main peculiarities and social customs of an officer's existence. Johnson's chief characteristic, next to his child-like simplicity, was his entire lack of curiosity as to other peoples' business; nor would it have been possible for a man of his mental capacities and education to have reached the rank of warrant officer had matters been otherwise. Thus, having no ideas beyond the performance of his duty, he had arrived at a position in which his intrinsic merits alone would never have placed him. In those days,

however, character counted for much. Never during John Johnson's thirty years of service, either as boy or man, had the virgin purity of his defaultersheet been sullied, and so his regimental promotion had been steady and regular. "He's not a flyer at accounts, and I don't give him more writing to do than I can help," was his captain's verdict, after Johnson had been a pay-sergeant for a couple of months; "but he's so jolly reliable, and he can't lie."

To the very end of his career John Johnson never displayed any trace of having received even the semblance of an education. In grammar, diction, or, what is called in schools for young ladies, deportment, there was scarcely a corporal in the regiment who was not his superior; and it was perhaps with pardonable pride that Mrs. Johnson said to him on the evening of the great day: "There, John, that comes o' doin' one's dooty! If I'd let you go a messin' about with books, like some of these boys as they gives the stripe to nowadays, you'd never a bin the dooty soldier you are."

Well would it have been for John Johnson had he rested on his laurels. His pension was earned, and with his antecedents and character he would have found no difficulty in securing suitable civil employment where honesty was of more account than genius. Or if he must keep within earshot of the beat of the drum why did he not accept the quarter-mastership which was then vacant and which, like most other things, was offered him. The rank of lieutenant, immunity from early (or even late) parades, a little less worry and a little more money, added to a prospective increase of pension, are inducements to which few sergeant-majors fail to succumb. But when the Colonel mentioned these matters John Johnson only thanked him respectfully

and said he had lived a "doody soldier" and, please God, he would die one.

Then a fateful idea took hold of the Colonel. Why should not John Johnson have an ordinary commission? So he formulated the question, and John Johnson could not for the life of him see why he should not. Unluckily this was just the one instance in a thousand when the Colonel should have talked to his wife before taking action. The nine hundred and ninety-nine cases when the commanding officer desires his good lady to assist him in commanding the regiment are so often under comment, that it is the positive duty of anyone discovering the thousandth to at once bring it into prominence. The Colonel's wife would have given him much useful information. She would have told him that up to the present time the word poverty had absolutely no significance for the Johnsons. Mrs. Johnson, like her husband, had first seen light in the battallion; and though they might possibly have read some book in the regimental library in which want and misery were described, the terms used would have no real meaning for them, more especially as all literature which did not deal with soldiers alone would be at once discarded. She would have reminded him that in a family "on the strength" like that of the Johnsons, when both were teetotalers and the man did not smoke, there was not only sufficiency but even luxury; and that the household was being conducted in a manner at which civilians would have stared when informed that the bread-winner's pay was five shillings and sixpence a day. However, if a man pays nothing for clothes, house, taxes, food, fuel, education, and doctors, and neither drinks nor smokes, he can manage to dress his wife and children, and throw in an additional comfort or

two into the bargain. Moreover, had the Colonel only given himself time to think, it would have been plain to him that to pay for these items without an increase of salary must mean the workhouse if you but possess only the understanding of a soldier, though you may escape with a fashionable bankruptcy if you have the morals of a company-promoter. But in the excess of his desire for the advancement of the man, the Colonel gave no heed unto these things, but straightway sat him down and wrote a letter recommending that a commission be conferred upon Sergeant-Major John Johnson, and duly requested the General of the District to transmit the same to the War-Office.

Now the chiefs who preside over that august body have not only a little trick of refusing all requests, but of couching the refusal in terms the reverse of polite. The Colonel had thirty-two years' experience of their peculiarities, (which apparently are germane to the Office, regardless of change of Administration) and, recognising that he would probably be unsuccessful, he determined not to publish his failure. Therefore he did not enter the dispatch of the letter in the records, but closed, stamped, and posted it himself. "I think I shouldn't mention this matter just yet, if I were you, Johnson," he remarked, and the Sergeant-Major accordingly saluted and retired. He was far too good a soldier to regard a suggestion from his commanding officer in the light of anything less than an order, and accordingly Mrs. Johnson, among others, was kept in ignorance of what had taken place. There were unmistakable signs that the cold weather was over before the reply came from England to the letter of recommendation; and then one morning the Colonel electrified the orderly-room by saying, "Ah, at last! Well, gentlemen,

you'll be glad to hear that they've given Johnson a commission." Even then the thing as it was had not dawned upon them, and one remarked, "I'm afraid he won't like quartermaster's work as well as the square."

"He's not going to be a quartermaster. Next week will see him a second-lieutenant in the 122nd, and as they're at Bareilly we sha'n't lose sight of him altogether, I dare say." The Colonel spoke triumphantly.

In his time he had made better suggestions than the present to the Horse Guards; but their fate had not been in proportion to their merit. When the subalterns, however, discussed the matter among themselves there was no trace in their remarks of the Colonel's optimism. "Poor devil, I wonder how long he'll take to break!" was the general question; but no one felt equal to answering it.

The 113th still talk of the dinner which they gave in honour of John Johnson the night before he joined his new regiment in Bareilly; and such was the historic importance of the event that the two chief men present suffered themselves to lapse from principle. The Colonel committed the enormity of speaking for nearly eight minutes in proposing the guest of the evening, and John Johnson was seduced into taking a glass of champagne, "for the purpose of drinking the 'ealths of the officers as was so frequently a drinking mine," as he afterwards explained to his wife. How frequent the said officers would have been in symbolising their good wishes had the object of their kind attentions remained is a matter of some speculation.

However, congratulations to the hero were forthcoming in other places than in the officers' mess; and on it being intimated that both the non-commissioned officers and the men had a word to say to the new officer in

places duly selected for the purpose, John Johnson gratefully availed himself of the invitations. Cheering in barracks that night was kept up until a late hour to the no small disgust of the punkah-coolies, to whom Thomas Atkins, thick-skinned and restful, is more grateful to contemplate than when perspiring and jubilant.

But there comes a time, even in the Indian night, when the soldier and the punkah-coolie slumber, and the period at last arrived when, as Hamlet says, the rest was silence. Nearly all the eight hundred men of the 113th who composed themselves on their pillows that night did so with a feeling of general contentment with themselves and with all mankind; but the proudest, the happiest, and the most hopeful man in cantonments was Second-Lieutenant John Johnson.

The officers of the 122nd received their new subaltern with cordiality and consideration, but for all that John Johnson found his surroundings very strange. For the first time in his life he experienced what he supposed to be shyness, and, believing the possession of this virtue to be something near akin to a disgrace in his new position, he made manful attempts to overcome it. The little courtesies by which his brother-officers endeavoured to smooth his path were, I fear, lost upon him. He had been accustomed to receiving plain matter of fact appreciation of his character and merit, but he did not quite understand what his new friends were about, or what meaning they intended to convey when they spoke to him.

"They seem a fine lot of gentlemen," he reported to his wife, after dining at mess on the night of his arrival; "but they don't talk straight to you like our own officers, and they seem a bit French-like in their manners." So John Johnson grew uncomfortable in their society, and the more they tried

to put him at his ease the worse he became. And he had official trials as well. He had yet to learn how "not to know." A sergeant-major is the eyes and ears of a regiment, but there is many an occasion when an officer must be discreetly unobservant. It is not good that the chasing and capture of a delinquent, together with the investigation of his offence, should be performed by one and the same individual. It is difficult enough for a young man of education (in the best and widest sense of the word) when he joins his regiment to fall successfully into the habits and customs of the British officer in dealing with men. It is more than difficult for a man with thirty years' work to unlearn, and possessing no such education, to do so. Indeed practically speaking it is impossible; and thus in his company duties Second-Lieutenant Johnson, honest, fearless, impartial soldier that he was, proved a complete and absolute failure from the start. To a mind untrained to think conviction on any subject comes slowly; but even John Johnson could not fail to notice that his new work was not attended with the old results. To a man who for years had been accustomed to nothing but success, and subsequent commendation, social and official failure was discouraging enough; but his domestic difficulties were even more serious to face. A few weeks' experience was sufficient to show him exactly how far two hundred rupees a month will go towards maintaining an officer, with a wife and five children, in a condition that is supposed to be suitable to his rank. And John Johnson had little else besides his pay. Men promoted from the ranks receive a Government allowance of £100 to cover the cost of new uniform. Johnson purchased his for slightly over half this sum, and in addition to this balance he had £200 in the Regimental Savings' Bank

when he received his commission; Mrs. Johnson's fortune consisted of £170; their total capital was therefore about £415, which, carefully invested, was realising a dividend of some four guineas a quarter. But this princely income had already commenced to diminish before the new officer had six months' commissioned service. His old Colonel, who had made his investments for him, found out that Johnson was already compelled to draw on his capital, and began to regret his rashness, while the news made his wife genuinely sad.

"Jim, dear, do you remember when Bobby had dysentery and you gave him nearly half a pot of jam because he wanted it? Your kindness was nearly fatal then; I only hope the Johnsons will recover. Poor dear John Johnson, he is such a child, such an absolute child!"

But it did not need his wife's parables to convince the Colonel of his error. And the worst of it was that he felt powerless to avert the consequences. Independence is a grand characteristic, especially in an Englishman, but it is nearly allied to many a trait that is unlovely. John Johnson in his time had seen many a smart non-commissioned officer fall from his high estate through debt, or from a too liberal use of the advantages of his position; and quite early in life he had firmly resolved never under any circumstances to accept a gift or consideration of any kind whatever. "It don't matter 'ow innocent you may be in taking it, but it always looks ugly when it comes up in the orderly-room"; and so Mrs. Johnson had to return the Christmas present of gloves which a corporal's wife with designs on the sergeant-major's influence had sent her. For the orderly-room was the end of all things with John Johnson, and that which savoured of ugliness within its

sacred precincts was surely an accursed thing. Nor was there any means of taking his scruples in flank. When John was gazetted it occurred to the officers of his old regiment that a pony and cart would be a useful present for a man joining at a new station ; and the Colonel was accordingly desired to ask if Second-Lieutenant Johnson would do his old friends the honour of accepting this proof of their goodwill. But the reply was ruthless and direct. "It's just the same as giving me seven or eight 'undred rupees, or mebbe more, and I couldn't 'ave it, thanking you, Sir, and the orficers, all the same." The new regiment had also discovered this peculiarity of their latest joined subaltern ; and there was therefore nothing to be done but to await events.

When two years had passed about £160 only remained of the nest-egg, and Mrs. Johnson's health had broken down under a strain to which she had never before been accustomed. Practical lessons in poverty during early life are imperative for the forming of a good economist ; and the ex-sergeant-major's wife had not had the necessary experience. "She ought to go home at once, Sir," said the Doctor to the Colonel, "and for the matter of that Johnson ought to go too. He's been nearly seventeen years in this country at a stretch, he tells me, and unless he does go I'm afraid he's about played out." Accordingly, as a subaltern was wanted for the dépôt in England during the following month, the Colonel nominated John Johnson.

Now a man may be poor in India, yet so long as he is an officer in a British regiment he cannot absolutely starve ; but in England the officer is lost in the individual, and provision-dealers do not part with food without money or security. No one will probably ever know the details of

Johnson's domestic life in the country town which was the permanent headquarters of the regimental dépôt. He was again among new faces, and he would disappear down a back street after morning parade giving no one any encouragement to follow him. Before his period of service at the dépôt expired the British Army was subjected to one of those artificial convulsions which are wantonly thrust upon it for party or political purposes about once in every twenty years. But the decree of July 1st, 1881, exceeded all previous pleasantries both in scope and in originality. The official abolition of the regimental numbers was regarded at the time as the most important item of the scheme ; but there were other points not less interesting. It was discovered at one and the same time that a man who was still a captain at forty years of age was unfit for Her Majesty's service, and that the Army required rather more than twice the number of majors which it then possessed. It did not occur to those in authority to transform their forty-year-old captains into majors, and thus several hundred men in the prime of life were pensioned upon the country, while subalterns were moved up at an alarming pace. Fortunately the wave of promotion caught, among others, John Johnson. He was posted to the home-battalion and ordered to join at Gosport.

Most people who are in the Army, and many who are not, have heard the story of the military buildings at Gosport, which by a touch of humour (of which the Horse Guards are not often guilty) are styled the New Barracks. A great many years ago accommodation for troops was required simultaneously at Gosport and Hong-Kong. The Royal Engineers accordingly prepared drawings and then, as

a great comedian puts it, "something occurred." The plans for China were despatched to the Solent and *vice versa*. Obedience is of course the first duty of a soldier, even though he be a Royal Engineer, and so the plans were duly executed in both places. No merciful fires have yet obliterated the monuments of this stupendous folly, and to-day in far Hong-Kong, with the thermometer at 90° in the shade, Thomas Atkins sweats at the top of a four-storied brick building, while at Gosport he gropes about in a subterranean bungalow which is carefully protected from the fearful ravages of the English sun. The officers' quarters were similar in principle to those of the men; and one of these underground dens, twelve feet by fourteen, was the accommodation allotted by Government to Captain Johnson. The £415 with which John Johnson had started life as an officer had already disappeared, and taking a house out of barracks was not to be thought of. There was another married captain, however, serving with the battalion who lived two miles away, and who did not require the room allotted to him by regulation. This room Johnson was prevailed upon to occupy in addition to his own; though not until it was proved to his satisfaction that he was, if anything, doing the captain a good turn by keeping it aired. Such was now the home in which Johnson, his wife, and seven children endeavoured to support existence.

The regiment were at their wits' end to know how to help him. The man's spirit was still unbroken and his queer notions of independence unsoftened; but want and wretchedness were telling on his character. He became querulous and soured; and talked of "my rights" oftener perhaps

than the circumstances justified. Still the patience of his brother-officers in well-doing was unwearied, and they behaved as no other friend but a brother-officer can behave when a man is down. It was the Paymaster who at last hit upon a scheme of practical relief. Being what is called a departmental officer accommodation was not available for him in barracks, and he drew a money allowance in lieu thereof. Although he was a bachelor he had taken a small house on the Anglesey Road, and was living there when Captain Johnson joined. After a short consultation with the Colonel he broached the subject.

"Look here, Johnson, I should be rather glad if you would change quarters with me. Living out by Anglesey I can never get a rubber of whist at night, and in more ways than one it's a nuisance being so far from the mess. If you'd move into my house, and let me have those two rooms in barracks, it would just suit my book."

Although the ex-sergeant-major had grown suspicious of late of most things and most men this suggestion seemed reasonable enough; though at first he was not absolutely convinced. "You really wish it yourself, now?"

"Shouldn't have been fool enough to suggest it if I hadn't, you know," was the casual reply.

"Then we'll make the exchange." And Johnson went off to tell his wife the news, relating the same as a simple fact without a thought of the man who, on about a fortnight's acquaintance, had done this thing.

A house is no doubt a desirable possession to a man with a family, but it is no substitute for food, and though squalor was averted, poverty and consequent want remained. However, the members of the household continued to support existence for another fifteen months, and then a telegram

was received ordering the battalion to Gibraltar. Now Gibraltar has been described from an officer's point of view as a spot which is rather more expensive than Piccadilly, though the hunting in the two places is about the same. The question of the hunting did not interest John Johnson, but the prospective financial point touched him very nearly. He had already begun to learn something about the more simple laws of domestic economy. It was quite evident that he must leave Mrs. Johnson and the children at home; and so, having seen them settled into a house (a hovel as a subaltern, who came across them, called it) near the Hard, John Johnson left in the old Himalaya for the Rock, Great Britain's fortress in the Mediterranean which cost much to win, but costs far more to keep.

John Johnson had been a captain for more than a year when he landed at Gibraltar. Now, although the pay of the regimental officer is the same to-day as it was in the time of Marlborough, there are still many civilians who believe, or affect to believe, that when a man gets his company he is fairly well off. They are informed that a captain receives eleven shillings and seven pence a day for his services, and they proceed to calculate that two hundred and eleven pounds a year are thus available for him to live upon. Now £200 a year is not a princely income when a man is compelled by regulation to regard appearances in his mode of life; but when this amount has been drawn upon for the band-fund, attenuated for regimental subscriptions, and plundered by income-tax, more than a quarter of the £200 at once disappears. If the captain is a bachelor, if he neither drinks nor smokes, if he limits his amusements indoors to the perusal of the *SOLDIER'S POCKET-BOOK* and out of doors to an afternoon walk, if

he never asks a friend to the mess and is careful in his dealings with a ready-money tailor, he may possibly support some kind of an existence upon the Government wage. There is no regulation against a man doing these things, but it is possible that were the officers of a regiment to adopt such tactics in a body, that regiment would what is called "soon hear of it" from the Horse-Guards. But Captain Johnson was not a bachelor, although he had recourse to the other economical practices aforesaid. Unfortunately also he had nine mouths to fill instead of one, and this problem daily assumed a more serious aspect. Poor John Johnson too had no taste for literature; he had read none of those engaging little volumes which teach one how to keep a family healthy, happy, and educated on £150 a year, and thus he resorted to methods which were possibly a trifle crude. He obtained permission from the Colonel to live out of mess, the translation of the privilege being that he only paid for food when he had it. At lunch-time only did John Johnson make his appearance at the table, and this, it was afterwards discovered, was his single meal in the day. Yet though he remitted home every penny of which he could possibly deprive himself, the family on Gosport Hard must also have had an elementary notion of famine.

It only took some three months of this sort of life to give his brother-officers the chance for which they were waiting. One day the Captain was too unwell to attend parade. Then the Doctor intervened, and John Johnson was promptly placed on the sick-list. Champagne, port, fish, and game were items in the initial prescriptions; for the patient had been put in hospital, and was not being treated in his quarters. By taking this step it was hoped that Johnson's strong sense of

discipline would render him amenable to any order that might be given by the medical officer. But he was an old soldier in more ways than one. "Champagne and fezzints ain't in the list of 'ospital comforts," he remarked when these luxuries were placed in front of him. "I can't pay for 'em, and no one else shall. I've never bin be'olden to no one for nuthin' dooring my service, man and boy, and, please God, I won't now."

It was all in vain. "You must get him home, Colonel," said the Doctor, "and see what you can do with the wife. Perhaps she'll let the regiment help her, if it's explained to her that it's essential to save her husband's life." The necessary medical-board was accordingly held, and John Johnson was invalided home. There were many friends who witnessed the departure of the *Orontes*, which carried an unusually large number of invalids to Portsmouth on this occasion. The sick men made a valiant attempt to return the cheers as the white ship moved slowly and reluctantly from the friendly shelter of the mole, and it seemed for a moment as if John Johnson would summon up strength to cheer too. The officers of the 122nd were present in a body. They remained on the mole until the faces of those on board were no longer distinguishable; and then the Colonel put into words that which all were thinking: "I'm afraid we've seen the last of poor Johnson."

Apparently Mrs. Johnson proved as deaf to entreaty as her husband, for the end came even more swiftly than the Gibraltar doctors had anticipated. The sick man lingered in the hovel on

Gosport Hard for seven weeks, and then expired peacefully. "He seemed to kind of slip out of life at the last," Mrs. Johnson afterwards confided to a friend; and so doubtless it was some consolation to those for whom he died to know that his end was peace.

Few military funerals in the Portsmouth Division have ever been more impressive in pageantry than the burying of John Johnson. The General himself attended, and the dwellers by the Hard are still eloquent in their descriptions of the length of the procession and the bravery of the trappings. But when this strange mixture of Pagan and Christian rites was concluded, when the bands had played themselves home to barracks, and the sight-seers had departed, a little knot of men still lingered by the open grave. Minute after minute went by; then one of them stooped down and, plucking a piece of heather which he carried away, reverently ejaculated, "Thank God!" The poor corpse in the grave when it breathed had numbered other friends than these, though surely none more true, and it was a relief to those of us who had known him longest and best to feel that he was no longer struggling for the life which only brought him woe. We had grieved when we heard of his acceptance of a commission; we had given him during his life as an officer all he would let us give him,—our sympathy; nor in his accession to higher rank could we find cause for congratulation. Now it was all over: his struggles were ended; and we were free at last to give thanks for the merciful promotion of John Johnson.

SOME HUMOURS OF THE COMPOSING-ROOM.

THE compositor, casually and unconsciously, is a fellow of infinite humour. The writers and speakers upon whose telling arguments, or flights of fancy, the compositor exercises his wit may be annoyed, but the general public has no alloy in the enjoyment of these typographical antics. Miss Fanny Fudge, the youthful genius discovered by Tom Moore, who used to contribute to the Poets' Corner of the County Gazette, complained bitterly to her cousin of the havoc the printers made of her sense and her rhymes. "Though an *angel* should write, still 'tis *devils* must print," she explained. Here is how those devils served her:—

But a week or two since in my Ode to
the Spring
Which I *meant* to have made a most
beautiful thing,
Where I talk'd of "the dewdrops from
freshly-blown roses,"
The nasty things made it "from freshly-
blown noses!"
And once when to please my cross aunt
I had tried
To commemorate some saint of her
clique who'd just died,
Having said "he had tak'n up in
Heaven his position"
They made it, "he'd tak'n up to Heaven
his physician!"

The readers of the County Gazette, no doubt, preferred the amended poem to the original.

The responsibility for these humours of the composing-room rests sometimes with the author's vile handwriting; but it is mainly due to the conditions under which the compositor works. A wooden frame, (or *case* as it is known in the trade) is divided by ledges into several receptacles or

boxes, for the various letters of the alphabet and the points of punctuation. In one box there are all A's, in another all H's, in another all Y's, and so on; and from this case, picking up the letters one by one as required, the compositor turns the manuscript into type. Practice enables him to do this not only with extreme rapidity but with remarkable accuracy; but he has often to deal with what he calls a *foul case*,—that is a case in which several of the letters have got into the wrong boxes—and as he thus unconsciously picks up the wrong letter from the right box, we find oats turned to *cats*, poets to *posts*, arts to *rats*, jolly to *folly*, and songs to *tongs*.

A theatrical critic in a notice of a charming young actress whose treatment of Portia had afforded him much pleasure, wrote, "Her love for Portia made acting easy." That was right enough, but what the types made him say was "her love for *Porter*," &c. A compositor who was better acquainted with the geography of the West than with Biblical lore set up the phrase, "From Alpha to Omega" as "from *Alton* to *Omaha*," and possibly found himself compelled to start for those places next morning. In the earlier half of the present century it was announced in a London newspaper that "Sir Robert Peel, with a party of *fiends*, was shooting *peasants* in Ireland," whereas the Minister and his friends were only indulging in the comparatively harmless pastime of pheasant-shooting. Shortly after the battle of Inkerman one of the morning papers informed its readers that "after a desperate struggle the enemy was repulsed with great *laughter*." The

omission of a single letter has rarely perhaps played more havoc with a subject which was certainly no laughing matter.

It must have been the very Printer's Devil himself who represented a very worthy advocate of the cause of female suffrage as exhorting her hearers to "maintain their *tights*." What the bridesmaids at a recent wedding must have thought when they read that they had all worn "handsome *breeches* the gift of the bridegroom," one can only guess. But whatever their thoughts may have been at seeing their pretty brooches thus transformed, their language at any rate cannot, we may assume, have matched that of the politician who read the following comment on one of his speeches : — "*Them asses* believed him." Possibly he was not much consoled by being assured that the reporter had merely wished to signify that "the masses believed him." On another occasion a reporter wrote : — "At these words the entire audience rose and rent the air with their snouts." The compositor has set up *shouts* correctly, but had not observed that the top of the *h* was broken off. An enthusiastic editor began his leading-article on a local election campaign with the phrase, "The battle is now opened." Unfortunately the compositor transformed battle into *bottle*, and his readers said that they had suspected it all along !

Mr. Gladstone, as is well known, is always lavish of his admiration for the new books sent him by aspiring authors or crafty publishers, but he has rarely expressed it more emphatically than when he wrote to the publisher of a certain novel, "We have not allowed one person to leave the house without reading it." A newspaper, recording this testimonial to the merits of the tale, made Mr. Gladstone assure the delighted publisher, "We

have not allowed *our parson* to leave the house without reading it." *Our parson*, at Hawarden, it will be remembered, is Mr. Gladstone's son, the Reverend Stephen Gladstone.

Landor, revising the proof of a poem he had written for THE KEEPSAKE, found the concluding stanza thus printed :

"Yes," you shall say when once the dream
(So hard to break) is o'er,
"My love was very dear to him,
My farm and peace were more."

This error seems to have angered the poet, whose temper indeed it was not difficult to upset, for upon the margin of the proof (which is still extant) he wrote: "Of all the ridiculous blunders ever committed by a compositor *farm* instead of *fame* is the most ridiculous. Pity it was not printed my farm and peas !!!" Richard Proctor, the astronomer, writing in his magazine KNOWLEDGE, stated that the most remarkable change which printers had ever arranged for him occurred in the proof of a little book on SPECTROSCOPIC ANALYSIS written for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The words, "Lines, bands and striae in the violet part of the spectra" were printed "Links, bonds, and stripes for the violent kinds of spectres." A still more amusing blunder, which Mr. Proctor declared that he had seen in the proof of a poem written by a friend, was the transformation of the line "He kissed her under the silent stars" into "He kicked her under the cellar stairs."

How history may be affected by a printer's error Kinglake has shown. To such a blunder is due the fact that the late Emperor of the French styled himself Napoleon III. instead of Napoleon II. Just before the Coup d'etat, the historian says, a clerk in the Ministry of the Interior wrote, in one of the proclamations which were to

announce the fact to the world, "Que le mot d'ordre soit vive Napoleon !!!" The printer took the notes of exclamation for numerals; and it was not because of any memory of the poor little King of Rome, but because of this typographical blunder that the Second Empire was dominated by Napoleon III.

Some of these blunders occasionally lead to libel actions and other unpleasant consequences. A most awkward one appeared many years ago in an early edition of a certain West Country journal. An announcement had been received of an officer's wife residing at Heavitree having given birth to a son; unfortunately the compositor took it upon himself to announce that the lady in question had contributed an addition to the family in the shape of a *sow*! Luckily the blunder was discovered when only two or three of the news-men had been supplied with their parcels, and the editor, fearing perhaps that the military gentleman would call upon him with a horsewhip, hurriedly despatched messengers after them and insisted on every copy of the paper delivered being collected and returned to the office, where they were consigned to the flames. Yet worse was the condition of the editor who, having in a touching obituary notice of a soldier described the deceased as a "battle-scarred veteran," was driven frantic to find in the morning that the types had made him write of a "battle-scarred veteran." The next day he published the following apology for the blunder: "The editor was deeply grieved to find that through an unfortunate typographical error he was made to describe the late gallant Major H. as a 'battle-scarred veteran.' He tenders his sincerest apologies for the mistake to the friends and relatives of the deceased; but to every reader of this journal acquainted with the feats of the major, it must have been apparent that what

the editor wrote was *bottle-scarred* veteran."

Many of the humours of the composing-room arise from mistakes in punctuation. For example, the following was prefixed to a contribution in the Poets' Corner of a Cumberland journal: "These lines were written nearly fifty years ago, by a gentleman who has for several years lain in the grave for his own amusement." Another paper in reporting a suicide said, "Deceased blew out his brains after bidding his wife good-bye with a gun." After the last Egyptian campaign, a London evening paper printed the following paragraph headed *A Cabman's Generosity*: "To show the enthusiasm with which our troops have been received, we may mention that we have been told of several instances where cabmen have driven soldiers from Egypt to the Barracks without charge." This was generous no doubt, but the journey must have been hard upon the horses. To a writer in one of the many ladies' journals we are indebted for the news that, "It has become quite the fashion of late for ladies to take their tea in their hats and gloves." But the ladies suffered still more severely at the hands of a Washington reporter who, describing the costumes at the Presidential reception, had intended to say that "Mrs. B. wore nothing in the nature of a dress that was remarkable." He left hurriedly for the West next day, when he opened the paper and read; "Mrs. Brown wore nothing in the nature of a dress. That was remarkable." A London paper reported on one occasion the capture in "mid-channel of a large man-eating shark." A provincial journal, copying the paragraph, but less careful about the punctuation, gave a different version of the incident: "A large man, eating shark, was captured in mid-channel." The omission of a comma once gave an awkward interpretation

to a paragraph in a Dublin newspaper which ran : "A very handsome memorial has been erected in St. Jerome's Cemetery to the late Mr. John Phillips accidentally shot as a mark of affection by his brother." In the following instance, it was no doubt a bachelor compositor who, in setting up the toast, "Woman, without her, man would be a savage!" by a trifling transposition of the comma made the sentence read, "Woman, without her man, would be a savage." In a sermon on drunkenness which appeared recently in a Dublin paper, the reverend gentleman was made to say : "It was only last Sunday that a young girl fell from one of the benches of this church, while I was preaching in a beastly state of intoxication."

Mr. Herbert Spencer once wrote, "Whales are not fish because they possess fins and a fish-like tail"; but what the public read was, "Whales are not fish, because they possess fins and a fish-like tail," which truly is a most remarkable reason why whales are not fish. In Ireland there prevails among Roman Catholics a pious custom of inserting in the weekly religious journals advertisements asking for prayers for certain intentions. A lady sent the following to one of these newspapers, "A husband going to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the faithful"; but, as it appeared, the faithful were asked to pray for "a husband going to see his wife." "May heaven cherish and keep you from yours affectionately Peter D.", was the way another Irish paper rendered the concluding portion of a letter written by a soldier serving in the late Soudan campaign to his wife in Cork. But perhaps the most amusing instance of the ludicrous effects of wrong punctuation is afforded in the following description of the Jubilee procession which appeared in an East Anglican weekly paper : "Next came Lord

Roberts riding. On a grey arab steed wearing a splendid scarlet uniform, covered with medals on his head, a Field Marshal's hat with plumes in his hand, the baton of a field marshal on his rugged feature; a smile of pleasure as he acknowledged the thundering cheers of the crowd."

Another entertaining course of contributions to the humours of the composing-room results from what is technically known as *mizes*, produced by the accidental running together of different items of news, and distinct paragraphs, that ought to have begun on separate lines. These errors are perhaps inevitable in the conditions attending the production of a newspaper. The paragraphs and items of news, when put into type by the compositor, are placed in oblong trays (known as *galleys*) with ledges on both sides and at the top, and from these the matter is lifted, by hand, twenty or thirty lines at a time, on to the *imposing stone* where it is arranged in columns as it appears in the printed newspaper. In this process, which as the hour of going to press draws near, must be done hurriedly, a portion of a street brawl will occasionally get mixed up with a description of a religious service; a comic termination is given to a touching obituary notice; and the pride of happy parents in the announcement of their child's birth is transformed into righteous wrath when they find it concluded with the sentence imposed the day before on a noted burglar.

In a certain newspaper, for instance, the descriptions of a street brawl and a church function were confused in this fashion : "The crowd then proceeded to indulge in language of a profane and obscene character. The Very Rev. Dean B. preached on the occasion, and the service was fully choral." The worshippers at a Wes-

leyan Chapel in a well-known town in the Midlands were once sadly shocked to find, at the end of a report of one of their services in a local paper that, "The congregation was large and respectable, and drunk and incapable in charge of a horse and car." In one of the London daily papers a high-flown eulogy of a new tenor, who was reported to have entranced the audience by his singing, concluded with this astonishing statement: "He was sentenced to five years penal servitude, so that society will for some time be freed from the infliction of his presence." It was in an Irish journal that the following strange report of the proceedings of the Roman Catholic Missions in Africa was circulated.

The Roman Catholics claim to be making material advance in Africa, especially in Algeria where they have 185,000 adherents and a missionary society for Central Africa. During the past three years they have obtained a firm footing in the interior of the Continent and have sent forth several Missionaries into the equatorial regions. They are accustomed to begin their work by buying heathen children and educating them. The easiest and best way to prepare them is to first wipe them with a clean towel, then place them in dripping pans and bake them until they are tender. After which cut them in slices and cook for several hours.

An atmospherical phenomenon was recently witnessed in the West of England which must have been of a very remarkable nature indeed, if we may accept a provincial paper's description of it as correct.

A singular phenomenon was observed in the sky last night. A blue Police Court charged with stealing a quantity of apples. The prosecutor said he had been the victim of frequent robberies, and in the eastern horizon disappeared

amid a shower of sparks. The sight was witnessed from the bridge by a large number of spectators; and the Bench were unanimously of opinion that no case had been proved and dismissed the sky was clear, the temperature was low and very little wind blowing.

It is not difficult to imagine the feelings of a well-known Dublin physician in the 'Fifties on reading the following ominous announcement in SAUNDERS' NEWSLETTER: "Dr. F. has been appointed resident Medical Officer to the Mater Misericordia Hospital. Orders have been issued by the Cemetery Committee for the immediate extension of Glasnevin Cemetery. The works are being executed with the utmost dispatch." It was in a Dublin paper also that the following astounding piece of news appeared: "Last Saturday a poor woman was taken ill suddenly in Camden Street and was safely delivered of one sergeant and thirteen constables of the Royal Irish Constabulary." In another case a line belonging to the report of a public meeting accidentally found its way into the births' column. The result was the following remarkable announcement: "On the 3rd inst. at Elkington the wife of J. S. Terry, schoolmaster, of a son. He spoke indistinctly but was understood to say that on the 3rd inst. at Ripon the wife of Joseph Landseer, tailor, of a daughter."

Such is the hurry with which work must be accomplished in a printing-office, in the small hours of the morning before going to press, that in all newspapers, even the greatest and best managed, mistakes of one kind or another will sometimes occur. But they are very rare when one considers the amazing number of newspapers printed in the United Kingdom.

A CRY FROM THE FAR WEST.

THE familiar saying, "One half of the world does not know how the other half lives," suggests more than is realised. It might be infinitely extended, or in a converse sense narrowed, for is it not nearer the truth to say that no given fraction of the human race knows how the other nine-tenths, or nineteen-twentieths, live, and nearer the truth, too, to add that besides not knowing, those composing that fraction do not care—do not, in point of fact, think about it? Or even supposing that we, or they, do think sometimes, or at all, about the great out-lying other fractions, it is probably to rest satisfied with the assumption that much more is known than is the case, till circumstances, exceptional or accidental, throw a sudden light in some special direction revealing the vast extent of the unsuspected ignorance.

The fraction of our world-companions in my mind to-day is not, even geographically speaking, very far removed from us. And in other respects those comprising it are of our own, *ourselves*, not only of our own much-mingled English blood, but also, if we use the pronoun as referring to the upper classes, in the wider sense of the expression, as signifying educated, refined people,—in this sense too they, in many a case, belong to us. There are few families nowadays who have no son, or sons, out away over the sea, in one of the new countries, the Colonies of which we at home talk so glibly, and of whose real conditions of life, family, and individual, we know so little.

Statistics, material facts, it is easy to get at, but dry bones of this kind

need clothing before they can appeal to our sympathy. And it is sympathy that we want to enlist, not mere sentiment, but sympathy extending itself to kindly action in one special direction, action for which we can beforehand safely promise the reward of sincerest gratitude.

The life of a colonist, of a settler, must be, it is easy to understand, in very many, in fact in by far the greater number of instances, extremely lonely. Not so much individually speaking, though cases are not wanting where for months, or even years together, a man of education and refined habits is restricted to the companionship of a few labourers utterly incapable of any real fellowship with him. But in the great, far-stretching Dominion of Canada, away in the North-West territories, the loneliness and isolation are more frequently those of families than of individuals. And besides these conditions is another, even perhaps more trying to bear, more insidious in its injurious possibilities, and that is the regularly recurring, long periods of monotony.

Season follows season; the busy times bring with them of course more diversity as well as occupation, and with them are always associated the excitements of the farmer's life—the hopes and fears as to good years and bad, the uncertainties and predictions about the crops. And these busy times are naturally also far more cheerful and exhilarating so far as outward surroundings are concerned. Nowhere do the fine weather, the summer with its sunshine and blue sky, alter the external aspect of things, and the involuntary inward response to it, more

completely than in the Far West prairie, in genial months a grand stretch of flower-bespangled green, and later on of golden yellow ripening to the harvest, as the autumn breeze stirs its surface into rippling waves of colour; in winter, so far as eye can reach, one unbroken (I had almost said *appalling*) expanse of glaring, lifeless, monotonous white. These long months of snow are, however, by no means the dreaded period of discomfort and patient endurance which dwellers in more temperate climates seem sometimes to imagine. On the contrary, the feeling of exhilaration experienced on a typical Canadian winter's day is hardly to be equalled in any other part of the world. The dazzling sunshine, the cloudless blue sky, and the pure air, are as bracing to the mind as they are to the body; and if the young generation now springing up on the prairie prove exceptionally enduring and robust, as seems likely to be the case, it is to their rigorous climate that they will in great measure owe their superiority. But at its best the winter is a period of inaction. Out-door work must cease, and one can well understand how these dwellers in comparative solitude should long for some connection with the outside world, some occupation wherewith to defy the long hours, not only of darkness, but, in mid-winter, of daylight too, when life must perforce be often confined to the four walls of the house, not bare of material comforts, but dreary, nevertheless, in the dreary season, and at its best seldom picturesque, though one is glad to hear that the culture of flowers, the surrounding of the homestead with something of a garden, is becoming year by year more frequently to be seen and more sought after. For it is but seldom that anything worthy of the name of a tree breaks the prosaic aspect of the settler's home; fuel, that greatest necessity of a Canadian winter,

demanding their sacrifice, so that the poor scrubby growth that remains is as a rule already doomed.

Happy the farmhouse where there is the interest of the animal dependents. A few head of cattle, some pigs and poultry, are a benefit in every way. They mean variety in work, as well as marketable produce in the shape of butter and cheese, eggs and chickens for sale at the township, ten or more often twenty miles off, bringing a healthy element of change and sociability into the restricted home-life, for the young people as well as for their elders. For there is no delay in the sons and daughters taking their share in the round of work: the sons as they grow up,—one special family has been described to me as typical of the happiest condition of Far West family life—helping on the farm, which assistance enables the father, a clever carpenter and mechanic, to earn odd dollars by jobs in the neighbourhood, when the work at home is not too pressing; the daughters no less useful and often in demand as temporary helpers in other households.

Where a few families are near enough together to form a little settlement, you may be pretty sure of finding a school, and a school with an efficient teacher, to which children will often come from as much as five miles distant. Here too, in the school-house, services will be held whenever a clergyman can be secured. But in the case of the prosperous little home I was alluding to, and such instances are not rare, there is no school within twelve miles, so our settler, his wife, and the grandfather living with them, teach and have taught the young people all they know.

This brings us at last to the real object and motive of this little paper. We would ask those who can do so,

of their abundance to spare some mental food for our Far West country-men and country-women, and their children. For purposes of education, technically speaking, and even more, with the object of giving interest and pleasure to the many hours of enforced leisure, books are sorely, pitifully in demand. Books in the widest sense of the word—old or new, uncut or well-thumbed volumes, magazines, illustrated papers—all such come as grist to this mill.

The few books brought from the old country have been read again and again till the owners well-nigh know them by heart; the weekly paper, if our settler is fortunate enough to have one sent regularly, is devoured to the last advertisement. And it is not as if ready money were plentiful in these Far West homes, not as if an order for literature could be despatched to the nearest city. Books and papers, games with which to cheer the long evenings, pictures (however inexpensive) with which to enliven the spotlessly clean walls,—all such things must be relegated to the ranks of luxuries, for coin is always needed for current necessities, farm implements, clothing, and so on, even where food is principally of home-production.

The machinery for supplying these sorely-felt wants is already in existence; the trouble and worry of acceding to our request is, we trust, reduced to the minimum. Six years ago, at the suggestion of the Countess of Aberdeen, by whom this great need had been vividly realised through personal knowledge of the conditions of life in the Far West, a Society, or Association, to speak more accurately, was formed for the purpose of collecting magazines, weekly papers and such-like, to be despatched in monthly packets to outlying settlers, either individually known to the members of the Association, or heard of through

the Immigration Agents or through missionaries of all denominations. The work has grown and developed to an extent little anticipated. As the news of the existence of the Association spread, demands and applications, touching in their earnest eagerness, poured in, and continue to do so, till it is difficult to keep pace with them, though the rule of only supplying those who have no other means of providing themselves with mental food is strictly adhered to.

Without following in detail the history of the Association during these six years, some idea of its extent and scope may be formed when it is stated that it now numbers twelve separate branches, situated in the larger cities of the Dominion, which among them, send out at present in various directions some eleven hundred parcels of literature monthly.

The rules are simple, comprehensive, and in number only four. (1) That the Association shall be undenominational. (2) That a small supply of both religious and secular reading shall be sent to each applicant. (3) That such reading shall be suited to the religion and as far as possible to the tastes of the readers. (4) That the Association shall rigidly avoid any semblance of proselytising in any direction whatever, religious or political.

When a new application is received, a form is returned containing questions as to the religion and tastes of the applicant, the particulars of his family and his eligibility as a recipient of the benefits of the Association. Each Branch has a large office, in several cases set apart for it in the Government Buildings, where the material,—books, magazines, &c.—is collected and where the working members of the Branch assemble monthly to pack up the parcels. Each member has about twenty names on her list, to whom she not only regularly forwards

literature but with whom she also corresponds, thus keeping in touch with her special families and gradually getting to learn their circumstances and tastes. In many cases this friendly intercourse brings new interests and real pleasure into lonely lives.

The greater number of parcels are sent to individual families, but some are forwarded to settlements, whose life, if a little more sociable, is almost as destitute of intellectual food. Other applicants again are single men; herders or labourers, or those who have taken up a small holding but cannot yet afford to marry; and in these cases above all, it is a satisfaction to believe that the work of the Association is an indirect means of saving some from the clutches of the curse of the country, the drinking-saloon. Then again, parcels are eagerly welcomed at the lumber and cord-wood camps, often thirty to fifty miles from a post-office, and still further from a railway-station, where men camp during a whole winter, receiving an irregular mail about twice a month. Large packages are also confided to clergy of various denominations in outlying and widely scattered parishes, or to school-teachers. Long before Klondyke became a familiar word the Victoria Branch was sending parcels in the summer months, by any chance that offered, to the miners on the Upper Yukon, who, during half the year, as all the world now knows, are completely cut off from communication with outside.

The diversity of tastes is interesting. Some of the really well-educated beg for books "worth reading;" though it must be confessed that lighter literature, fiction especially, is in great request. And this calls for care and selection on the part of the senders, as no books are distributed which are not healthy and wholesome in tone.

At Christmas-time the little people are particularly remembered, not only by the usual despatch of story-books and children's papers but by adding to these, for once in a way, coloured pictures, games, Christmas-cards, and even packets of candy. And this spring another welcome addition has been made to the literature in the shape of flower and tree seeds, to encourage the beautifying of the homesteads by ornamental gardening, as well as a good print of our Queen in special commemoration of her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

The association owes much to the generosity of the Dominion Government which has accorded free postage for the parcels, varying in weight from three to five pounds. The Allen and Dominion Steam-Ship lines have, on their part, undertaken to convey freight-free to their destination all consignments from the newly-organised English Collecting Branch of the Society.

The mention of this brings us to our definite request for help in the shape of books, magazines, illustrated or other weekly papers. We do not ask that these should be sorted or selected; all that part of the work will be done by the enrolled working members of the English branch. We only ask to have all and any spare good literature despatched to *The Secretary, Aberdeen Association, Imperial Institute, London, S.W.*, the Directors of the Institute having kindly given space and permission for receiving and sorting the parcels on their premises.

In conclusion I will give two or three extracts from letters to Mrs. Gordon, formerly a worker for the Association across the water on the spot, and thoroughly acquainted with its whole inauguration and history, now its organising Secretary in Great Britain. These simple words may

give reality and personal interest to our appeal.

*Ontario,
January 7th, 1895.*

DEAR MADAM,—Your kind letter received. Monthly parcels have always arrived safely and are much appreciated. I think your Association will never know how vast its influence has been for good. In my own district the people are mostly unable to subscribe to papers or magazines; to such the papers sent are welcome visitors and heartily greeted. I always ask them to read and exchange with their neighbours, so a small parcel often covers a large district. We are 180 miles from the nearest railway station. The mail comes by stage twice a month and brings any parcels that may be sent. Yours respectfully, ——

Another reader had lost by fire everything he possessed, and in the letter announcing this he says, "your books help me to forget my misfortunes in the evenings;" and again, "your parcels have been a great comfort; a sign that there are some who think of those who meet with misfortune."

*Saskatchewan,
January 9th, 1896.*

DEAR MADAM,—We thank you for your kindness. . . . I am truly grateful. . . . The parcels of literature are such a help in our home, and I know those who get it after us are fully as grateful. I had a visit from two young girls the other day, begging for something to read; the nights were so long, they said. . . .

A clergyman writes: "You cannot imagine the blessing to us poor parsons of your Society; the Silent Missionary work often proves the best. I remain, one of the grateful ones." And from another quarter: "I thank you for the last parcel as well as for all the others. People always say that you never get anything for nothing, but you have broken that rule. The reading is very nice and interesting, and the monthly

parcel is always a welcome visitor. With best wishes for a happy New Year to you and all the members of the Association." A school-teacher from Saskatchewan writes: "Accept the united thanks of the children and myself for the books received and the lovely cards. Excuse me for sending enclosed, but I wished you to know what use was made of the copy-books you so kindly sent." The copy-books were old ones, across the writing of which these poor children had written their own copies! The following came from a lumber-camp in Ontario:—

February 4th, 1896. DEAR MADAM,—I take this opportunity of thanking the members of your Society for the magazines and other reading-matter. I can assure you the aim of the Society has been fully realised in our case, and we one and all feel very grateful. I desire also hereby to let you know where and to whom your packages sent to us go to. In the first place we are in the lumber-woods, 35 miles from the nearest settlement, and P.O. (Loring) on the French River. Very few of the members of your Society probably know from experience how lonesome and out-of-the-world-like it feels to be all winter in the woods. . . . The camps or houses for the men are of unhewn logs, divided into two rooms, one for sleeping the other for cooking and dining.

Last Sunday I was at one of our out-lying camps and this is what I saw. The entire gang, of about forty men, gathered round one of their number who was reading to them out of one of your magazines (and by the way he was a very fair reader); they were paying strict attention and the interest in their various faces showed they were enjoying it. This instance brought home to me the debt of gratitude we owe to your Society. . . . We also have three families living here, and your books for the children are much appreciated. If you could conceive how lonely and monotonous it is for the three women here, you might form an idea how anything readable is thought of. We get our mail once in two weeks. . . . In summer we are not so badly off, as we get our mail by boat to French River.

Lastly, I will quote these few words from a young widowed mother.

Maple Farm, January 10th, 1896.
DEAR MADAM,—I am sure I don't know how to thank you. . . . Those books are the very thing I wanted for my little ones. . . . We have now a Sunday-school on Thursdays (!), but it is six miles away, too far for my children to go. I work my farm myself. It is all so new and strange, but I must not grumble, for there are some who have lost their homes as well as their husbands. . . . If but my children were able to talk about things, it would not be quite so lonely. . . . You should see the delight of the little things over the dollie; they were nearly beside themselves. . . . I cannot tell you how sorry I feel at hearing of your leaving Canada. . . . I have felt through corresponding with you that I had a true friend in my loneliness.

These extracts, taken almost at random from a pile of letters, speak for themselves.

It will, I feel assured, add to the interest and sympathy which I earnestly trust this little appeal may draw forth, to mention the name of the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, as president of the newly formed English Branch, and as vice-presidents, those of the Marchioness of Lansdowne, the Countess of Derby, and Mrs. Chamberlain.¹

All correspondence, let me add, should be addressed to *Mrs. Gordon of Ellon, Office of the Aberdeen Association, Imperial Institute, London, S.W.*

I end as I began with the assurance of the heartiest gratitude for all and any help that may be given to us.

LOUISA MOLESWORTH.

¹ Lady Dufferin's own appeal in the shape of a letter to the Press, will already doubtless have been read by many of my readers.

RAMAZÁN.

As under cover of departing day,
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away.

OMAR KHAYYAM.

THE quiet evening hour, when the tired earth sighs softly with relief that the day is ending, is settling down over the land, and the whole sky is afame. In the west the angry sun, a ball of crimson fire, is sinking slowly and reluctantly upon a bed of tawny pink and saffron clouds. In the east the warm flush of the reflected sunset splashes the horizon with colour, against which the jagged black cloud-banks stand boldly out with edges strongly defined. Waves of delicate tints, alternating and growing more exquisitely ethereal as they near the arching of the dome overhead, paint the whole of the vast heavens, till all the world is drenched in colour. The slender stems and drooping fronds of the palm trees, all swaying gently and sleepily in the soft breeze of evening, are outlined against the ruddy sky, and by contrast their tender green takes to itself a colour that is almost black. The reaches of the river run darkly with here and there a dull, uneven wave of crimson reflected from the splendour overhead; and on the banks, watching with hungry eyes the coming of the night, sit lines of patient fasters; for it is the Blessed Month when daylight is a hated thing. They sit in little knots and groups talking fitfully in languid tones, for at all times, in the Malay Peninsula, sunset is an hour of lassitude and depression, when men's energies are at their lowest ebb, and during the month of Ramazán

the slight faintness born of long abstinence is upon the people.

These groups are gay with colour, for the Malays, who lack all power to appreciate the glories with which Nature has surrounded them, display an exquisite taste in dress, and love bright tints cunningly blended and silks and cottons of the finest. A little cluster of natives is always a picturesque sight, and differs as much from a crowd of white men as does the glorious tropic sky from the dingy, leaden-coloured clouds that lower over us on a winter's day in England. As you watch the fasters on the river bank, the gorgeous plaid of a silk *sârong*, or waist-cloth, the green of a young dandy's trousers, the white of a linen coat, the flutter of a head-kerchief, the brilliant orange gown on the back of a pilgrim from Mecca, or here and there the flapping of a gay garment as its wearer passes to and fro, serve to give colour and life to the scene. Every tint is intensified and deepened by the mellowing glory in the sky, and a ruddy hue is imparted even to the brown faces which gaze so patiently at the sinking sun.

But the beauties of the evening are nothing to these simple folk. They gaze lazily at the blood-stained heavens, at the crimson flood which rolls slowly by them, at the black bulk of the buffaloes standing knee-deep in the shallows or wallowing luxuriously in midstream, or at the tiny dug-outs gliding by to their

moorings. The scream of the cicada and tree-beetles amid the palms, the squeaking low of a young buffalo that seeks its dam, the faint chirrup of the birds, the clucking of sleepy fowls, all the soft, half-heard noises which herald the dying of the day, come to their ears. But to the fasters all these things mean nothing, save only that in a little space empty bellies will be suffered to have their fill.

Presently the sun, sinking lower, slips behind a broad bank of heavy clouds, and as it leaves the earth, throws passionate arms of gold and opal heavenwards, as though to embrace a world from which it is loth to part. A moment longer, and the tints on all sides fade and alter as one watches them, until the brilliancy of the sunset hour gives place to the quiet, more chastened loveliness of the after-glow. One little star, low down upon the horizon, blinks sleepily as though newly awakened from a heavy slumber, and the blackness of night begins to creep stealthily across the heavens, slowly effacing the rosy tints as it passes.

From the wooden mosque in the quiet groves the *Bildl* raises his voice in shrill falsetto, sounding the call to prayers. The sound floats out across the river, proclaiming that God is great, that there is no God but God, and that Mahomed is the Prophet of Allah, and the watchers rise up quickly. The semi-silence that has held them, while the last terrible hour of waiting passed with leaden feet, is suddenly exchanged for the hum of many voices. The more scrupulous among the fasters hasten to spread their mats upon the warm earth, and to perform the prostrations and to repeat the formula prescribed by Mahomedan ritual for the evening prayer. The majority of the Malays, however, have in their own estimation suffered sufficiently in the cause of

religion for one day, and the thirst of parched throats is slaked by the water of green cocoanuts and the juices of luscious tropic fruits.

The infidel observer hardly knows whether to regard this month of Ramazán as a period of fasting or feasting; for at no other time do men live in such plenty and such luxury as during these thirty days of penitence. While the Fast Month lasts, more money is spent in buying food, sweetmeats, and dainties of all kinds than is dreamed of during any other portion of the year. Prices rise exceedingly in the bazaars and in the villages, and the hawkers of sweet-stuff and of cunningly prepared condiments, and the vendors of fruit, fat oleaginous rice, and richly spiced meats wax rich through driving a roaring trade. Look not for the hollow cheek, the cavernous eye, the ascetic air, among the followers of Mahomed's law who rigidly observe the Fast, for Ramazán leaves no such marks behind it. Those who are well acquainted with the tenets of the Mahomedan religion are aware that the teachings of the Prophet of God are more full of strange anomalies than is any other system that the perversity of man has devised; and a Fast Month in which men wax fat and well-loving, where the spirit of penitence is lost in a whirl of feasting, while the letter of the law is observed with scrupulous exactness, fits naturally with the practices of such a faith.

From the hour when the dawn makes the gray east grow pale, until the moment when the short-lived dusk lies low upon the land, the Mahomedans fast as do the followers of no other religion. To them fasting means entire abstinence from all creature comforts. No food, nor drink, no tobacco-smoke, no fat quids of areca-nut must be suffered to pass

the lips of the Faithful; even the saliva must be ejected, lest by any chance it should serve to moisten the parched throat, and this is why spittoons form so important a part of our household furniture during the Blessed Month. Merit is lost if the faster seeks solace in sleep during too many of the long hours of daylight, and though the *rājahor*, the noble, in his women's apartments, may break this rule freely, the bulk of the people must toil as usual at the ploughing or tree-planting, the searching for jungle-produce, or the netting of deep-sea fish, while they endure the aching thirst which the fierce heat occasions, and the hunger born of hard manual labour.

Among many Malays the observance of the Fast has come to be regarded with a superstitious awe, and few are found who dare to risk the consequences that might be expected to follow upon a breach of its rules.

I remember seeing an old Malay Chief,—a man, be it said, who was utterly ignorant of the tenets of his religion, who never prayed on weekdays, and never attended the Friday congregational prayers at the Mosque—faint dead away when, one day in Ramazán, a whitlow on his hand was lanced; yet when he regained consciousness he steadfastly refused to swallow the restoratives he needed so sorely. I have marched all day, through blazing sunshine, or up and down steep hills, and through forests where the brooks on every side sang of cool water to be had for the asking, and, since it was the Blessed Month, my parched followers have patiently endured the pains of Tantalus, and have gone dry and thirsty till the merciful sun dropped below the horizon and suffered them to drink their fill. Yet not one of these men was in any sense religious. They were wont to drive a horse and cart

through the strictest prohibitions of their Prophet upon the smallest temptation: they cheerfully committed five mortal sins daily, by allowing the five hours to slip past unobserved by the prescribed prayer; and they added an extra mortal offence to their account regularly every week so surely as Friday came round and the congregational prayers remained unattended. They would probably have found it difficult themselves to explain why they observed the Fast in such trying circumstances, when they so readily neglected all their other religious duties, the performance of which occasioned no more suffering than is experienced from a slight sensation of boredom; and if they could not account for their conduct, how can others hope to do so? It is merely another of those baffling anomalies which the student of native character must expect to encounter at every turn; but I cannot think that their endurance and self-sacrifice were utterly thrown away, no matter what Mahomed may have to say to the contrary.

But let us take a day in the Blessed Month beginning, as do the Mahomedans, with sunset; for, with the extraordinary aptitude for putting things up-side down and undertaking everything from the wrong end, which seems to white men the distinguishing characteristic of Orientals, day in the East starts when the night shuts down.

When the motley groups upon the river banks break up, when fruit and green cocoanuts have slaked men's thirst, when tobacco smoke is being puffed soft and cool over the astringent betel-nut, every individual who has helped to compose the crowd wends his way homewards, slowly and languidly, with peace in his soul. During Sha'aban, the month preceding the Fast, every man who can afford it, and who

is not already provided with a wife, has married some girl of his acquaintance ; for though the women fast also, how should a man cook his own rice during the days of Ramazán ? Accordingly a face, of which he has not yet had time to become weary, is within the thatched hut to greet him on his coming, and by seven o'clock,—a decent interval between the opening of the fast and the consumption of a heavy meal being necessary if the empty stomach is to receive and retain food in large quantities—a meal is spread along the matted floor. The wife sits modestly at the man's side, to tend him as he feeds and to urge the excellence of some particular dish which she has carefully prepared in order to tempt his appetite. Her own meal will be a less stately and solemn affair, eaten in a dim background amid the eats and the cooking-pots, when her man's hunger is appeased.

"Feed the beast !" says the English wife. "How should he love her, seeing that she had no care for his vitals ?" says the Malay lady when her friend is divorced, showing that both in the West and in the East the female mind has formed the same cynical opinion that the stomach, and not the heart, is the seat of manly affection and sensibility. We have been taught to place implicit faith in women's intuition and instinct ; but as a man, I cannot but think that in this instance her generalisation is a fallacy. Perhaps she attaches an undue importance to the department over which she chances to preside, and so is led to deceive herself as to the noble nature of our sex.

As the evening changes into night, the man saunters out of the hut, and strolls through the quiet moonlit groves to some neighbour's house. As he goes he casts a look or two at the great silver orb staring down from

the sky overhead through the tender lace-work of the palm-fronds, for its shape tells him, who has no other calendar, how the month of penance is waning. He counts the time that divides him from the end of Ramazán slowly, laboriously, with fingers doubled into the palms of his horny hands, each one to mark a day of fasting still to come.

At his neighbour's house the holy men and priests and pilgrims of the village are gathered together to feast, and to chant verses from the Koran ; and he too joins in the noisy dirge, eating, chewing, and smoking anything upon which he can lay his hands. The intervals between one chant and another are filled up by conversation, gossip of the village or the Court, often pungent and scandalous enough, but no man present finds any discordance between the discussion of such topics and the intoning of the Sublime Book which alternates with the talk. The priests and pilgrims and the holy men will chant and chant, and talk and eat and gossip till the day is coming with the dawn, their host supplying the ample meal with which the followers of the Prophet fortify themselves for the long abstinence of the morrow. Some bachelors, and a few other outliers stay to share in the meal, but most of the laymen trail off homewards, one by one, through the soft fragrant coolness of the night, to the huts where their wives await them.

Soon after midnight the *göyang* breaks upon the stillness,—a wild tocsin of sound, produced by beating gongs in a peculiar manner—and for full half an hour the clanging wakes the echoes. Lights spring up in the darkened houses, and the passer-by may hear the sleepy voices of the women-folk as they set about the preparations of the men's meal, and the querulous cry of some infant whom the unusual stir has awakened rudely.

Soon after two o'clock the heavy meal of rice and richly spiced curry and condiments is eaten ; and when a final quid of areca-nut has been chewed and tobacco inhaled for the last time, the village once more sinks into slumber.

During the first days of the Fast Month many find it impossible to rouse themselves sufficiently to eat a hearty meal at such an hour, and these go hungry through the day, suffering some real distress from want. But the habit is soon formed, and as Ramazán approaches its end all eat the *soul* (as this meal is named) with appetite and relish. So quickly even do men become the creatures of a recurring custom, that for the days immediately following the conclusion of the Fast all the world wakes hungry and loudly demanding food from their sleepy women-folk during the small hours of the night.

And here is the secret which underlies the whole Fast. It is necessary to try it in order to understand how slight a mortification this abstinence from food during the daytime becomes to most men, after the first wrench has been got over. Tobacco and quids of areca-nut are missed far more keenly than anything else, far more than water, strange though this may seem ; but even abstinence from these good gifts of God during the hours of sunlight soon forms itself into a habit, and presently becomes a privation that hardly makes itself felt. For the first four days, for the first week in some extreme cases, real suffering is entailed by the observance of Mahomed's law ; but when the habit of going without food, drink, tobacco and betel-nut during certain hours has had time to form, the discomfort experienced in ordinary circumstances is very trifling indeed. Of course when great physical exertion has been necessary, a man may

for a space be racked by thirst ; but even this is mitigated greatly by the fact that for days it has not been his wont to drink from morning to evening. I speak as one having experience, for in a spirit of enquiry I, some years ago, made the experiment in person, and am well able to gauge how far the sufferings of my Malay friends are really acute during this month of Ramazán. I have always found that a few days' personal experience carried one further on the road to complete insight with the unknown than years of the most patient and scientific enquiry can do.

During Ramazán Malays rise somewhat later in the day than is usual among them. They shirk such duties as they can find any means of neglecting, are more persistently idle than ever, and work as little and as badly as their task-masters will allow. But as the vernacular proverb has it, "Milk in the breasts cannot be shirked," and no matter how willing the spirit, the weakness of the flesh makes it absolutely necessary for the bulk of the population to pass some hours of each day in the toil they grudge and hate, but without which life cannot be supported. But when all is said and done the Blessed Month holds thirty days during which a Malay feels that, even more than at any other time, he does well to be idle. The Malay ideal of a happy life is one in which a man need do nought but eat and sleep,—*makan tidor sähaja*—and during Ramazán he goes near to attaining this high standard of existence.

At the Malay Courts, upon the east coast of the Peninsula, the Kings keep open house during the Fast Month in true feudal style. The King himself, punctual for once, for even he cannot risk the unpopularity which would be his did he keep the hungry fasters waiting, sits in the

bâlai or Hall of State, at the hour when the sun is sinking. Mountains of white rice and dishes of fowl and duck and fat goat's meat, spiced in a hundred ways by the ladies of the harem, cover the floor of the *bâlai*, where only men of rank may eat, and are distributed among the people who squat in the temporary booths, erected for the purpose, within the fences of the royal inclosure. All may come who need a hearty meal, and a Malay would take shame to himself were he to allow the Fast Month to slip by without availing himself of the chance of a good feed at the King's charges.

Then through the long night the dirge of the priests and holy men floats out across the river. The scene in the *bâlai* is the same as that in any village hut where during the Fast men are gathered together to praise God in the intervals of feeding and gossip, only that things are done on a somewhat larger scale. It is the same with everything on the east coasts. The King is a great man, rich and powerful, and he rides in some state; but he talks the same dialect, with its peculiar provincialisms, as does the tiller of the soil without his gates. If you look closely you will see that, King though he be, he differs very little from the ordinary run of Malays, save only in his power and his wealth. The same superstitions, the same desires, the same instincts, the same likes and dislikes, the same prejudices, are to be found alike in prince and peasant in a Malayan land. If you understand the one thoroughly, and have sufficient imagination to forecast the effects which a change of environment may be expected to have upon him, you will find that the other is equally well known to you. Perhaps it is this close resemblance between the prince and the peasant, coupled with

the fact that the former is usually sprung from the people on his mother's side, that is accountable for the astonishing loyalty which the Malay often feels for those of the royal stock.

When the moon, whose crescent marked the seizing of the Fast, has waxed to the full, and then has slowly waned until the twenty-seventh night of its course has come, the land after dusk is a blaze of light. Every house is illuminated, and the banks of the rivers are set with flaring torches and cocoa-nut shells full of hard resin flaming brightly. As you float upon the broad bosom of the stream through the blackness of a moonless night, the sounds of revelry are borne to you from the villages which line the banks. A full-tongued Malay yells a love-song at the top of his voice; a party of priests intone the Koran in solemn, resonant chorus; the laughter of some merry-makers, dimly seen in the red glare of one of the larger bonfires, ripples across the water. Among the palms and fruit trees, in which the villages nestle snugly, the tiny points and dots of light, from the torches set above the houses, play hide and seek as your boat glides past them, looking like a million fire-flies dancing in a thicket. The reflections of the bonfires and of the illuminations, seen in the water of the river, shimmer and skip lightly as the stream rolls on. At Court some rude attempts at transparencies, loud and vulgar and unsuccessful, are made by the more civilised Malays; but elsewhere, throughout the land, the natives pile their fires and light their pitch torches as their fathers did before them; and Nature, who loves the natural and abominates the artificial, helps them to some really beautiful effects.

Then at last the night arrives

when the little crescent moon shows that Ramazán has found a successor. The women-folk look out the smartest clothes, for to-morrow their men will appear in their best, and then pass to the cook-house to prepare food in plenty, for from sunrise to sunset on the *Hári Ráya*, the first day of the month of *Shawal*, all the world will eat and Guzzle and gorge, until some few will die of a surfeit. Meanwhile the men rejoice noisily. Everyone who can lay hands upon a gun and a

pinch of powder, fires it off gleefully; every gong in the country is banged and beaten, while the thumped drums throb and pulse, and the plaintive howling of the *thikir*-singers floats out over the land.

And then, amid a babel of glad sound, the people rejoice exceedingly,

As under cover of departing day,
Slinks hunger-stricken Ramazán away.

HUGH CLIFFORD.

COUNTRY NOTES.

I.—THE CHURCH.

It is a grey stone building which would hold a thousand persons, in a village whose entire population numbers two hundred. Rather a cold handsome place it is, as seen from a distance standing out clearly against the autumn sky ; and as seen this Sunday morning, half an hour before service, with the door (a very old door, dating from heaven knows when—for nobody else does) just opened by the tottering old clerk, rather a damp, desolate, moth-eaten old place too. The chancel is a fine one ; the west end is spoiled by a gallery, and the pulpit is the three-decker usually associated in the mind with an elderly college Don, a black gown, a white tie, a long text out of the Old Testament, and a chilly, scientific sermon of indefinite length. The college Don put up the east window many years since to the pious memory of a little daughter whom he loved, and of whom he is reminded perhaps, if reminder be needed, every time he looks up at the pure fair face of a Virgin awaiting an Annunciation, which a part of it represents. This window, with its rich soft colours reflected on the uneven pavement of the middle aisle, is the only thing to redeem the church from a dreadful coldness, neglect, and formality, and makes one forget, when one looks at it, how abominably damp and musty are the green baize boxes set apart for aristocratic devotion, the rickety condition of the benches for the poor, and the melancholy plight of the pulpit-hangings once red and whole, now tattered and torn and faded into depressing shades of magenta and saffron.

There is a forlorn little harmonium with some ragged hymn-books on it standing where the choir ought to be and is not ; and on the Table (always thus spoken of here) a few melancholy flowers so forlorn and dead that one cannot help fancying the little daughter (who would be a middle-aged woman if she were alive now) might almost have placed them there herself.

With a little gust of searching wind, a great fumbling of keys, and a bronchial cough, the old clerk (who has been back to his house to fetch a black velvet skull cap for his bald head) re-enters the church and, having looked round leisurely, rubs up a pair of silver-mounted spectacles with the corner of a bandana handkerchief, places them on a nose with its old tip freshened into a cheerful red by the keen air, blows the nose sonorously, and at last leisurely removes a solemn Sunday hat (the only silk hat in the village, and fondly brushed the wrong way by a devoted and short-sighted wife,) and replaces it by the cap. The clerk may be seventy-eight years old perhaps, but as everybody here, if they are not killed off by the cold in infancy, lives to be ninety-eight at least, he is considered, and considers himself, quite young and vigorous, and in point of fact does perform his clerical duties as well, or as badly, as he has done any time these fifty years. This morning as usual he stumbles up the aisle to the vestry, ascertains the precise degree of dampness of the Parson's surplice (it has been hanging there all the week), looks at the Table rather critically, mutters something which may be taken to mean "That's the same as it's been for half a century

anyhow, so that's all right," puts the Parson's books, blowing the dust off them, in the Parson's place, looks up through his old spectacles at a couple of larks singing cheerfully in the roof with an expression which says, "Well, there you are, so there you must stay, and darned if I see why you shouldn't," anathematises quite aloud some erring, but unknown youth who has destroyed a hymn-book and scattered the fragments about the free seats, collects one or two of the leaves with much rheumatic difficulty in stooping, and then sits down wheezingly at the end of the church, until a friend enters. The friend and Dick have an audible conversation for some minutes. They appear to be asking after each other's healths at first and talk with an East Anglian accent not to be reproduced. Then they go on to discuss the Michaelmas sales. They laugh their feeble old laughs (the friend is a gay spark of seventy) without regard to their locality, and whenever they feel inclined. It may indeed be announced as an axiom that an East Anglian has no respect of any kind but self-respect, and is as free from reverence, and perhaps from intentional irreverence, as an infant.

A bell-ringer strolls in next, quite leisurely and half an hour late. He pulls the bell until he is tired, when he stops. Then he sits down, sighs, and yawns; until, seeing through his little window the Parson coming along the road, he recommences pulling with a heavy bored air and no enthusiasm at all.

In the meanwhile a kind of congregation has begun to arrive: two children each holding on to the fat hand of a third, a ruddy cheeked, serious person of four, who presents the appearance of having been dragged to church by the main force and unanswerable persuasions of Sam and Moggie, and who sits through the

service very good, round-eyed, and wondering; a rustic who takes a whole seat to himself and puts his legs up on it during the sermon that he may sleep more peacefully,—every one being quite stolid and not in the least surprised at his movements; a pretty old country Betty, with her prayer-book wrapped up in a pocket-handkerchief; more children in clumping boots and with highly polished Sunday faces; a mother with a voluble baby; more rustics; a very raw recruit whose uniform attracts a great deal of attention and audible comment, and who is thereby rendered even more sheepish and embarrassed than he is normally; an old farmer with a little girl in his hand; a very coy Phoebe with a tendency to giggle and a pink ribbon in her hat; and at last, with a prelude of rolling carriage-wheels, a little conversation in the porch and an air of expectation in the congregation, the Squire and my Lady. The Squire is a ruddy sporting person of fifty who would as soon think of missing morning service as a meet of the hounds; a person very well contented with life, one can't help thinking, as he walks up the aisle with creaking cheerful footsteps and a nod for this friend and for that. Accustomed to say the responses very loud is Sir John; to sing the hymns in an astonishing great voice, immensely hearty and unmusical; and to slumber during the sermon with a very pious expression on his honest face and his hands folded orthodoxly on a robust waistcoat. He opens the door of their pew for my Lady (quite a fine pew and upholstered in crimson) and looks into a white hat for a couple of minutes before he arranges Madam's footstool and cushions and prayer-books to her very indifferent liking, and settles down in his corner to look round pleasantly to see who makes up the congregation and who

doesn't, and to wonder why the—well, in consideration of the place, why in the world old Slocum (the Squire's name for the formal and Hebraic parson) is so late again this morning.

My Lady, who is twenty years younger than her husband, with a very charming face marred only by an odd anxious line here and there about the mouth and eyes, also looks at the congregation, restlessly somehow, and out through the window where the birds are singing, and up at the great monument where a row of little stone Elizabethan girls in ruffs and farthingales are lamenting the decease of their father, Sir John's ancestor; and then, sharply, as the door opens to admit the Parson, as if almost she were waiting for someone who is not the Parson and who never comes.

It is ten minutes past eleven as that official hurries up the aisle, quite surprised at finding himself late (he has not been in time a single Sunday for five and twenty years) and with that unkempt air which comes from an absorption in the dead languages, a widowed condition, and the ministrations of an elderly housekeeper. He has put on the damp surplice, reached the second stage of the three-decker to the accompaniment of the village schoolmaster on the harmonium, and begun on the Wicked Man before the simpler part of the congregation have realised his arrival. The old Clerk says *a—mon, a—mon* at intervals, and can't find the Psalms till they are nearly finished, by reason of the leaves of his book fluttering so much in his unsteady old hands. Betty makes the responses in a very pretty devout old voice from the front pew, and some little time after everybody else. A stolid Thomas of ten produces a green apple during the first Lesson and eats it at leisure and seriously. The voluble baby, mistak-

ing the singsong of the Litany for a lullaby, goes to sleep with a little gurgle of contentment and its mother rocking it very softly. The Squire leads a hymn with immense vigour, and the vermillion recruit in the background follows with a stentorian rustic second; Dick's friend blows his old nose like a trumpet through a commandment; my Lady looks above her book with absent eyes; and after a Collect, an Epistle, and a Gospel, banns of marriage (which attract even the volatile attention of Phoebe), a moment's pause while the Parson puts on his black gown in the vestry, and a quaint bidding-prayer, comes the sermon. The sixty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, verses, one, two, three, four, five and part of the sixth,—“And we all do fade as a leaf.”

The Parson has preached the same sermon fifty times before, on fifty just such autumnal Sundays, to just the same kind of congregation as this one, in the same monotonous old voice. Yet to-day perhaps, as he separates the pages of yellowed manuscript with his thin hand, he remembers when it was written, when his own leaf was still in the green, in some other place than this, milder and fairer, with its little garden full of June scents and sunshine, a little house with roses nodding at the windows, a girlish foot-step on the path, a girlish figure in the little study, with a white frock and a handful of flowers, who came and looked over the paper and laughed and said what a dear dismal old thing Peter always was, and had been, and would be, and made him smell the flowers and sat for a volatile minute on the arm of his grave study writing-chair and arranged his prim hair in a little pattern of her own, and laughed again with her eyes very bright and wicked as she put her arch head back through the long open windows to say, as a parting, that if

only Peter would make up something livelier than those dreadful old killjoys of sermons she really did believe she could almost—almost—almost—My God ! how one remembers ! The Parson reads on monotonously without comprehending a word. She died, with the bloom and the dew of her life's gay morning fresh upon her, and something, which may be the sunshine as it falls, stained a hundred colours, through the window he put up to the memory of the child she left him, suddenly blinds his eyes—“ And we all do fade as a leaf.”

The baby sighs in its sleep a little. The mother has got pretty far in a purely domestic calculation how to make Tommy's nankeen trousers serve for Bobby, and how to cut Bobby's little frock to the infant dimensions of the sleeper on her lap. She draws away the shawl which covers the little red puckered face for a minute with that heaven which lies about us in our infancy in her country eyes. On the opposite side of the aisle, the person of four sits very fat, upright, and serious, with an anxious look full of expectation fixed on the Parson, as if he might be going to produce from that deep box sweets or a doll, like the conjurer at the fair last week. Betty, leaning forward a little with her hand to her old ear, listens devoutly to them “ comfarterble words” and says some of them softly to herself, not understanding but thinking she understands, and knowing indeed in her calm and simple soul some of those deeper truths which are hidden from the wise and prudent. The recumbent rustic slightly alters the position of his legs and snores softly. Above him, the cold sunshine which has come out fitfully again from behind a windy cloud brings into prominence the white tablet erected
To the memory of Mrs. Barbara Trotter, a person of Good Under-

standing and Just Principle, but in Conjugal Life not so Happy as Deserving, without attracting any particular pity for poor maligned Mr. Trotter, who may have so suffered after all from his virtuous Barbara's just principles and good understanding as to make naughtiness on his part venial if not inevitable. Phœbe, very conscious in her gay ribbons, looks up under them at the recruit and then, with a blush like the heart of a rose, very fixedly and piously at the Parson. A bramble is blown against the window above the pew where Dick's friend is sitting and has sat every Sunday through the ministrations of three parsons, and, as a little white-haired urchin with a couple of marbles in his chubby clenched fist, even before that. Perhaps if his cheerful old mind could disengage itself from the Michaelmas sales and the flittings (with the Parson's monotonous old discourse running sleepily through the secular thoughts) he might wonder how many, or how few, more Sundays he should sit there brave, cheery, and ruddy-cheeked. But he does not so wonder.—“ And we all do fade as a leaf.”

There is a little pause. My Lady turns sharply. Most of the congregation are in that state of agreeable apathy or absent-mindedness from which nothing but *And finally my brethren* will rouse them. The Squire is asleep quite tranquilly, a pious church-sleep, quite different from the abandon of a snooze in the smoking-room or a guilty forty winks in the drawing-room. My Lady, sitting forward a little, opposite him, with an expression in her restless eyes which may mean disdain or indifference or fear, or a hundred things, has paid no attention to the sermon nor to anything perhaps, unless it be to some insurgent thought in her own mind.

Is she in love with this man, one wonders, twenty years older than herself, strong where she is weak, cheery, honest, God-fearing, upright, devoted? Has she come to him as a refuge, a rock where she may hide from the storm of some passion which has shattered her life? Has she come to him to stand, stalwart, between her and the world? Or is there some memory of which he knows nothing, and from which he could not save her if he knew all? She looks round, stealthily almost, with her unquiet eyes from him to the congregation of pious grannies, sleepy rustics, and simple mothers. She has scarcely even the bond of a common nature with such people. She has no child of her own, nor will have. The poor cares of a humble life have been denied her's, to keep it, if not happy, safe. She is waiting,—waiting,—waiting always,—for what, God knows! But the waiting is in the quick turn of her head at every sound, in her restless hands, in her deep eyes, in her soul.

The Parson is recapitulating dreadfully now, and a little ruffle of hope that the sermon is at last beginning to have an ending stirs among the school-children. The Squire wakes slowly, quite comfortably sure that he has never been to sleep, and my Lady with her bored air smiles back a little into his honest eyes as she must do to-morrow—a hundred to-morrows—for ever—until—

"And finally my brethren—" the congregation falls on its knees, or sits forward a little as its fancy takes it, for a prayer and a blessing. The old maid from the White House stands up firmly in her prim pew. She has been brought up in orthodoxy by her papa, the late Incumbent, and acts as if there was the doxology there ought to be. The schoolmaster in the choir plays a wedding-march with many remarkable chords, not because there

is any question of a wedding, but because that, and an entirely secular air from an elderly opera, are the only voluntaries he knows. The old clerk hobbles to open the great doors; the wind and sunshine come in; the school children scramble past each other with a candid infant joy to get out. Betty pins up her old shawl, and re-wraps her books in the handkerchief. The rustics divide a little to let my Lady pass down the narrow path to her carriage. The Squire exchanges good-mornings with them, carries my Lady's books, makes a very small joke with a very small farmer which she does not wait to hear, laughs at it jovially himself, gets into the carriage after her, is driven off at a respectable Sunday pace by his comfortable bays and followed, not by polite blessings like a Squire in a story-book, but by the simple observation from Dick's friend, "Ain't half up to his feyther, but ain't a bad plucked one, ain't Squire." Pheebe and the recruit go off together towards the fields where they may walk and satisfy their souls with silence. The mothers gossip together; the children play by the lich-gate; the girls and women bob to the Parson who comes slowly out of the great doors, with his books under his arm and his absorbed air, and who turns his old head once perhaps to where (with the weeds growing thickly on it and the long grass blowing in the chilly air) is the grave of one Christabel who died, aged three and twenty. The clerk closes the great doors behind the old figure of the man who loved her so much better than his dull books and learned ambitions, looks back into the church cold, grey and forlorn, fumbles with the lock, puts on his superior hat thoughtfully, turns the giant key, hobbles away to dinner, not ill-pleased, and for another week the church is left—to God.

S. G. TALLENTYRE.

A CUBAN FILIBUSTER.

ONE sweltering evening the little steamer Olivet lay gently rising and falling on the oily swell of Arucas Bay. It was overpoweringly hot, with a clammy heat that made respiration difficult and exertion an impossibility, while across the tall palms ashore and the white houses of the Cuban town there rolled a mass of steamy haze.

Beneath the Olivet's poop-awnings, from which the condensed moisture trickled and fell in drops, the Captain, Engineer, and Mate sat before a well-spread table, whereon flasks of red and yellow wine nestled among mangoes, crimson bananas, and golden pineapples. The three were on better terms than is usually the case, for, having been engaged in a certain trade between the Gulf ports and Cuba, in which they occasionally carried goods not enumerated in any manifest, the voyage had been a profitable one for all concerned.

"Well," said the Mate, mopping his dripping forehead, "I never want to go ashore in Arucas again. I can see that firing-squad now, and the half-dead wretches writhing upon the stones. Thank goodness we're going out to-night. I'm sick of Cuba. There's another batch of insurgents to be done to death to-morrow, they say. Cold-blooded murder, and a disgrace to humanity, I call it. And now, I suppose they're going to church proud of what they've done. Listen to them—pah!"

From out of the mist above the town there rose the clang of bells, and when this had died away a strain of music came through the listless air as the crew of a Spanish war-ship lying close at hand formed up in parallel

lines along her deck. The band took up its station, and the officers stood bareheaded upon her poop as the silken folds of the Spanish ensign fluttered down from the peak, a limp streak of crimson and gold.

"Music and incense in the churches, and half-dried blood on every stone in the *plaza*,—it's a curious world. After what I've seen I could be a rebel myself," said the Mate. The Captain merely nodded: he was a plain man, and rarely wasted words; but the grim old Engineer glanced towards the Spanish cruiser with a flash in his keen eyes that his firemen knew and dreaded.

"With steam at a hunner' an' fifty, an' seventy revolutions, I would like fine to grind the auld Olivet's stem right through her,—just there amidships," he said. The Captain smiled as he answered, "I believe you, Mr. Gordon."

Then the *marcha real* rang out from the cruiser's deck, and afterwards there was silence, only broken by an unlovely voice chanting something about *Home, dearie, home*, in time to the wheezing of a concertina beneath the cargo boat's forecastle awning.

Presently the Skipper rose sharply to his feet. "Hallo, what in the world do you want?" he asked, as a gaunt man, dressed in dilapidated linen garments which might have been white a long time ago, came up out of a provision-boat alongside, and climbing the poop-ladder dropped wearily into a chair. Thrusting back the remains of a shapeless Panama hat from a swarthy, sunburned forehead, he said; "Well, you ought to know me, Captain Armstrong.

Thought I was a Cubano, eh?" and he turned a pair of wolfish eyes towards the table.

The Skipper gasped with astonishment. "Watkins who joined the Port Tampa filibustering expedition?" he said; but the Engineer interposed: "The man's just starving. Give him time. Drink this first and eat, Watkins; we'll listen til ye after."

The stranger ate ravenously, like one who had not seen food for days, and then, throwing back the linen jacket, showed a curious blue mark on his shoulder, and livid scars upon his wrist. "That's where a rifle-ball went in, and hot iron made the others," he said. "Cut off from the ship, landing arms we were, and hunted like wild beasts."

"Where's Wilson who went with you?" asked the Skipper.

"I'm coming to that," the man replied. "Wilson nursed me when I was shot, and then we fell into the Spaniards' hands. An officer laughed when I said we were British, and they burned my wrists to make me tell where the rebels lay. It's true, Gordon, you needn't stare like that; I saw them tear out one wretched peasant's nails. I got away one night, and, as I hadn't been in the West Indies ten years without learning to speak Spanish like a native, I followed that detachment of Cazadores day and night, sleeping in the swamps and begging as I went. The peasants all hate the Spaniards at heart, and they gave me what they could. To-day I stood in the *plaza*, and saw my Cuban comrades shot like dogs. There are others, and Wilson is among them, too, whom they take on board the cruiser to-night, to be murdered in batches somewhere else as an example, and the question is, will you help me to take him out?"

"It's a risky business, and I don't see how it is to be done. Why didn't

you report to the Consul?" said the Skipper wrinkling his brows.

Watkins rose stiffly to his feet, a gaunt skeleton of a man, with the stamp of pain and hunger upon his face. "There's no Consul in this forlorn place; and how could I reach Havana without money, and the chance of being seized on the way? I've passed as a Cuban, and the Spanish officers would insist I was one; they don't waste time on investigation. Last night they took off a detachment of prisoners, six negro boatmen, who hate the Spaniards like poison, and two half-drilled conscript guards in each barge. Another batch goes off at ten to-night; I found that out. Now, if you drop in-shore, you might run foul of the craft by accident." Then the speaker flung his arms above his head, as he added: "See here, Armstrong, I followed that detachment starving, and risked my life a dozen times in trying to contrive my comrade's escape. If you can't help me, I'll go back and die with him. Which is it to be?"

"It's a risky business," said the Skipper again, "but we'll try." The Mate brought down his fist with a crash. "We'll take him out," he said; "yes, by heaven, we'll take him out, if we have to run down the cruiser too!" The Engineer said no word, but hurried away below with a grim smile upon his face, and from the vigorous language that rose up through the gratings it became evident he was busily engaged. Presently the escape-pipe trembled and throbbed with a vibrating rush of steam, and the Mate chuckled, for he knew that Gordon's heart was in his work; as a rule he would sooner spill his blood than waste a pound of coal.

At nine o'clock the Mate stood upon the forecastle-head, clad in streaming oilskins, and the cable came grinding home in time to the panting

of the windlass. The rain came down as it only can in the tropics, smiting the iron decks with a rattle and roar, and speckling the oily sea with white. The crew stood about him, and nudged one another as they noticed their officer's unusual indifference to the mud the links flung about deck and winch-drum, for news had leaked out through the steward that something unusual was on hand.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the grizzled Quartermaster, touching his hat, "but we'd take it well if you was to tell the Captain that if it's savin' some poor wretch from the Spaniards we're with him one and all."

"Thanks," answered the Mate; "I'll let him know." Then he climbed to the lofty bridge, and when the telegraph tinkled *half speed ahead*, there was a great splashing and seething aft, for the Olivet was flying light and her propeller whirled round half-blade clear. With a heavy thud accompanying the clatter of the well-worn engines, and a shivering through all her rusty plates, she headed in-shore; and Captain Armstrong leaned out over the bridge-rails with a very anxious face as the lights of the cruiser drew near, swinging to and fro through the rain like twinkling stars.

A sharp challenge rose from the Spaniard's poop, and someone cried, "Keep off with that steamer—where are you going?"

"In shore, to pick up a last barge of rum before we go to sea," the Mate hailed in Castilian; and a hoarse voice answered: "*Buen viaje; vaya con dios.*"

The cruiser faded into the blackness astern, and the Mate said quietly: "She had no steam, sir, I think; there was no vapour about her funnel."

"Thank goodness for that," was the answer; "we've more than enough. Gordon's burning coal very recklessly to-night. You may as well put out

the side-lights now, and bring Watkins up here."

The Mate obeyed, and when he returned the stranger paced excitedly up and down the bridge with the water soaking from his tattered garments. "Get my spare oilskins out of the chart-room," said the Captain; "it means fever to get soaked in a climate like this."

"The fever and I are old companions," Watkins answered hoarsely; "and I've work to do to-night. Can't you hear oars?"

His companions strained their ears, and presently the dull noise of wood grinding against thole-pins became faintly audible. "Yes," said Captain Armstrong; "there they are at last."

A low, black object, ringed about with phosphorescent fire, came splashing out of the darkness. Watkins hailed her in Spanish: "Have you seen a barge loaded with rum casks?"

"No," answered a sullen voice, and what followed was not a blessing this time: "*Vaya al diablo.*"

"He's not there; he would have recognised my voice," said Watkins. "Suppose they should keep him ashore?"

Another barge came up, and passed; but neither did she contain him they sought; and the three fell strangely silent as they waited, listening with all their ears. Half an hour of nervous suspense followed, during which there was nothing to be heard but the welter of water along the plates, and the clanking of the engines as the Olivet slowly circled round. Then the rain ceased, and presently the splash of oars drew near again.

"This must be the last; surely he is there," said Captain Armstrong. "The only thing we can do is to run foul of them. Most of the olive-skins can swim, and if these can't they must take their chance. Hail them when they're near."

The telegraph tinkled for *full speed*,

and the bridge-rails rattled as the half-submerged propeller whirled and splashed, driven by every pound of steam. "Steady helm," said the Captain, as a patch of deeper blackness appeared upon the starboard bow with a flicker of lambent sea-fire about it. The Mate hailed the approaching barge, and all started as an English voice made answer. "Help, for the Lord's sake, help! Run them down," it said. There followed a sound which might have been a blow with a rifle-but, and some one cried in Spanish, "Silence there, rebel dog!" Then the oars splashed confusedly, and a negro shout of alarm rang out.

"She's plenty way," said the Captain grimly, "and we can't do wholesale murder with the propeller. Port there,—hard over helm!"

The clatter of the engines ceased, and there was a grinding of wheel-chains as the lofty iron bows swung round. A man stood up in the barge waving a lantern, and then the white streak of the steamer's forecastle-head hid the craft from sight. A clamour of cries followed, and above them all the three could hear a shrill voice calling in Spanish, "Stop her before you run us down!"

"Steady helm," was all the Captain said, and the next moment there was a dull, crunching noise beneath the bows as the iron stem bit into the yielding timber. Then something rasped and bumped along the plates in a phosphorescent swirl of water, and an English shout came from among the wreckage, "Will some one fling me a line?"

A rope went whistling out, and the Mate swore viciously beneath his breath as the end swung slackly back against the side, while the Captain, leaning over the rails sent down a cheering cry, "Hold on, we're coming back, and we'll have you yet," as the steamer forged ahead into the dark-

ness. Then a shadowy figure leaped up on the side-light screen, balanced itself for a moment, and, just as the Mate stepped forward to lay his hands upon it, flung both arms aloft and launched out into mid-air. "The crazy fool—there's another to be fished out now," gasped the Mate. "We'll stop her and back her down," said the Captain. "Stand by the gangway with a lantern, and lower the Jacob's ladder."

Again the propeller churned and rattled, and presently great wreaths of white, spangled by luminous green and gold, seethed forward as the Olivet slowly went astern, until Watkins's voice came from somewhere beneath the poop; "Way enough! Stop her, or the screw will cut us up." The vibration died away: the steamer came slowly to a standstill; and the Mate leaped down to the lowest step of the ladder, while wiry seamen, clinging like cats to trailing lines, and jamming their toes against the landings of the plates, climbed down her side. By the yellow glow of the Mate's lantern the over-turned and crushed-in barge became faintly visible a short distance from the quarter. Shadowy objects loosed their hold upon it, and came splashing towards the ladder. Black hands caught at the rungs and lines, and with a shout of "Up you go," a dripping negro was helped aloft, and dragged over the rail with a vigorous kindness that almost dislocated his arm. Another and another followed, and then some one cried in English: "Throw me the end of a line. I've got him here, but he's hurt or faint." A seaman flung a rope, and raising his lantern the Mate saw an indistinct figure crawl out of the water, and make the end fast to something which lay upon the wreckage, half in and half out of the sea. Then, with a cry of "Heave a little," the man slid down into the water, and, aided by the tightening line, seized his

comrade by the arm, and struggled with him towards the vessel. Leaning down, the Mate stretched out his hand; thin, sinewy fingers grasped it, and when he hailed the deck above, ready hands hauled upon the rope; the half-conscious man, for such he seemed to be, swang rapidly aloft, and a hoarse *hurrah!* rang out as he was lifted over the rail.

Watkins and two Cubans dragged themselves out upon the ladder, and, as the Mate slipped aside with his toes upon the landing of a plate to let them pass, another head came into the circle of light, and he fancied he caught a shimmer of uniform buttons, and saw braid about the wrist as the swimmer thrust forward his hand. "Send one of the negroes back to make a stout hawser fast," shouted the Captain from the bridge. "Be handy, there's no time to lose." As the Mate raised his head he fancied he heard a soft thud, and a smothered gurgle behind him. When he looked down again the Spanish soldier had disappeared. In answer to his challenging glance a Cuban said: "He sank suddenly, and there was another hurt by your bows. But it is no matter; there are too many of the kind in Cuba." The Mate shuddered a little and said no more. Whether murder had been done or not he never knew. In any case, he thought, it was no business of his if the insurgent had avenged some butchered comrade; and he had seen things in the *plaza* of Arucas which had set his own blood on fire. A negro swam out with a hawser, and when he came back the Mate hailed the bridge: "Got them all now, sir, and the tow-line's fast."

Meantime, as the steamer went ahead again, a group of seamen stood in the twinkling glow of a lamp about the after-hatch, glancing compassionately at the soaked and haggard wretch who lay gasping on the

tarpaulins, with his head upon Watkins's knee. Both were worn and wasted by sickness and hunger, and there was something pathetic in the sight of the hollow-cheeked man chafing his comrade's thin wrists, and bending over him with anxiety and pity in his face. Presently the sufferer moved a little, and made an effort to rise, but Watkins checked it gently. "Not hurt, thank the Lord!" he said. "The shock has been too much for him, half-starved as he was, and broken down with sickness. You're in good hands at last, Jim," he added softly; "and it would need all the Armada of Spain to take you from us now."

The Mate, looking on silently, felt something tickling in his throat, and a growl in which pity and fierce wrath were strangely mingled went up from the hard-handed, weather-beaten men about him. The steward held out a flask of wine, and Watkins stretched forward his hand; but a stalwart figure in greasy dungarees thrust it rudely aside, and knelt upon the deck. "Wine, that's nae drink for a sick Christian,—only fit for garlicky Spaniards. Here, lift his head, this will pit fresh life intil him," said a voice with the accent of the Clydeside ship-yards; and this time a laugh went round, as Gordon, the engineer, attempted to thrust the neck of a whisky-bottle forcibly between the sufferer's teeth.

"You'll choke him out of hand; gently with it," said Watkins. Presently the spirit did its work, for the man sat up, leaning against his comrade's shoulder. "That did him good," observed the latter. "It's a long time since I saw a civilised drink either, and I'm somewhat played out myself." When he handed the bottle back there was very little left inside.

"That's no bad, for a start," was Gordon's comment, "an' there's plenty

mair. When I've raised another ten pound upon the starboard boiler we'll try the rest."

"I think you can move him now," interposed the Mate. "Stow the sick one in my berth, and help yourself to everything you want there, Watkins. See to the two Cubans, Steward, and you, Quartermaster, take the negroes forward. Each man to his post." Kind hands carried the rescued Englishman below, and the group broke up.

The Mate climbed to the bridge again, and, thanks to the blackness, they slid past the cruiser with slowly turning engines unobserved. Then, with her much-patched boilers throbbing beneath a fearful over-pressure of steam, and a curious tremor throughout her frame, the Olivet drove out to sea, faster than she had ever gone before, or ever would again, the remains of the shattered barge rolling over and over in the flashing, screw-churned wake, and straining at the double tow-lines until they cut it adrift far out in the Gulf.

It was long past midnight when Captain and Mate took counsel together in the chart-room. "Have you made up your mind what to do?" asked the latter. "I've been thinking it over," was the answer, "and have decided to let well alone, and say nothing about the matter. Whether the soldiers got ashore, or were settled by the Cubans and negroes, is no concern of ours, and we've towed the launch away. Now, some of the Spanish officers must have known that Wilson, at least, was a British subject, and, unless they catch us on the coast, they'll say nothing for their own sakes. If we report it, there'll be a raking up of many things best let alone; for all our calls are not set down in that official log. We'll land the Cubans to-morrow night, and crawl close along the

coast all day out of the cruiser's sight."

On the second night Captain Armstrong stopped his engines off what one of the negroes said was the mangrove-shrouded mouth of a lagoon, and then addressed the Cubans. "Gentlemen," he said, "I'm sorry I must deprive myself of the pleasure of your company now. This part of the coast is in your own friends' hands, and I wish you all good-bye."

Watkins translated, and one who seemed to be a person of importance swept his Panama hat to his knee as he answered; "*Señores*, we are your servants for life, and we will never forget."

A boat was lowered; negroes and Cubans climbed down into it, and when the Mate seized the tiller they pulled in-shore, guided by the roar of the surf. It was very dark, and beyond a narrow circle of dusky sea, rising and falling in glassy undulations about them until walled in by a dingy haze, there was nothing to be seen. The phosphorescent water flamed about the oars, and fell, as it were, in a stream of fire every time the blades rose up, and even at that distance from the shore the odours of steaming forests and rotting vegetation were heavy in the air.

For a while no one spoke, and then one of the Cubans gripped the Mate's arm. "Listen," he said; "a steamer comes."

"Stop rowing," cried the Mate, and, as he bent low down towards the water, a regular, throbbing sound fell upon his ears. "The cruiser, most likely," he said; "thank goodness we carried no lights aboard the Olivet. I can't tell just where she is, but the sooner we get out of this the better. Give her way there, all you're worth."

The oars ripped through the water, and the boat shot forward into the

darkness, the negroes thrusting upon the looms beside the British crew. And all the time the steady pounding of engines drew rapidly nearer and nearer, though the belts of haze which hung over the swaying sea-flow took up the sound and flung it to and fro, as they always do, until no man might say from whence it came.

"Lay in the oars," said the Mate at last. "She's somewhere close at hand, and the noise will only give us away;" and the boat rose and fell motionless upon the glassy swell.

Then there was a sound like the ripping of thin ice, and with a mass of fiery froth boiling about her bows, and one tiny jet, as it were of green flame, creeping up her stem, a steamer swept out of the mist. There was no sign of any light about her deck, save that the long tube of a pivot-gun glimmered faintly with a reflection from somewhere, and a trail of luminous vapour streamed from her lofty funnel. The men dared scarcely breathe, for she passed but a few fathoms away, and the Mate's heart stood still as a hail came down from a look-out on the foremast. But it was only the routine cry of the watch;

and the next moment her white poop faded into a wisp of vapour, and the boat rocked violently on the eddying wake.

"Thank goodness, she's gone!" said the Mate; "and now I'll be easier when we've landed these gentlemen, and the Olivet's under way again."

A negro piloted them into the lagoon, and an hour later they caught the glimmer of a green port-fire and boarded the steamer again. Captain Armstrong listened gravely to his Mate's story. "It's a mercy I didn't burn that light too soon," he said. "Well, if they're looking for us down the coast, I'll head north for the open sea. It will be a long time before we see Cuba again, and I'm just as glad. This kind of thing is too exciting for me."

Many months afterwards Captain Armstrong found a packet awaiting him at the offices of the British owners. It contained a handsome pair of binoculars with three words and a date engraved upon them: *Arucas, in recuerdo.* The Captain did not feel called upon to explain why they were sent him, but he uses the glasses still.

HAROLD BINDLOSS.

THE ROYAL BUCKHOUNDS.¹

LORD RIBBLESDALE has anticipated the only fault any reasonable man might be disposed to find with his work. "I am afraid," he confesses, "that a great deal in this book has little or nothing to do with the Queen's Hounds. Often and often they have, as it were, to be dragged in by the scruff of the neck. I am constantly running out of my course, and at the outset I must plead this as my excuse for the many liberties taken with the unities of time and place in the following pages." His lordship does in some sort ramble; but he is such an extremely entertaining companion that it would be sheer pedantry to try his book by the strict rules of composition, to condemn it because it has not certain qualities which it does not profess to have, and which, to tell the truth, it is much better without. Buffon, —or was it Gibbon? Certainly it might have been Gibbon — used always to sit down, we are told, to his desk in full dress. Lord Ribblesdale one can fancy preferring the unrestricted ease of a shooting-jacket, though we should never suspect him of those "bed-gown and slipper tricks" which Sir Walter so heartily denounced, for indeed there is nothing slovenly about him. Macaulay records in his diary that he "read some of a novel about sporting—a Mr. Sponge the hero," and how, it being a new world to

him, he "bore with the hasty writing and was entertained." He would have found it no hardship to bear with Lord Ribblesdale, who writes a capital style, one suiting his subject and suited by his plan, easy and light and cheerful, and touched with a humour that is as agreeable as it is surprising; for we have noticed (though we have no explanation to offer for it) that the merriment of sportsmen, if not, as Doctor Johnson maintained the merriment of parsons to be, mighty offensive, is apt, at least in print, to be somewhat tiresome. That is the last epithet we should select for Lord Ribblesdale. No one will deny that he can tell a good story well after reading how he took the hounds down into the Old Berkshire country, when the Beaufort men came to see the fun, and saw plenty of it in Rosey Brook; of his one melancholy venture in the Harrow country, when the fog made his heart, like Arthur's, "cold with formless fear" of wire, and Agitator showed the ineptious potboy (in a terrible *a-posteriori* manner as Carlyle would have said) the folly of getting near a long-tailed blood-horse; and of the day with M. Lebaudy's staghounds in the forest of Fontainebleau, begun on the big Prussian horse famous as a *cheval de retraite* ("an equine type that needed explanation, but which turned out to be a good hack home"), and ended on the little French horse *parfait pour les dames*.

¹ THE QUEEN'S HOUNDS AND STAG-HUNTING RECOLLECTIONS; by Lord Ribblesdale, Master of the Buckhounds from 1892 to 1895. With an Introduction on the Hereditary Mastership by Edward Burrows, compiled from the Brocas Papers in his possession. London, 1895.

Moreover the plan of Lord Ribblesdale's book is not only convenient for himself; it is also mighty convenient for his reviewer who, with so good an example before him, may perhaps ven-

ture to ramble a little on his own account. Tristram Shandy thought digressions the sunshine of reading. We don't claim so much for ours, but it is certain that they are, for the writer, a most easy and agreeable way of doing business. "Take them out of this book," says Tristram, "you might as well take the book along with them;—one cold eternal winter would reign in every page of it: restore them to the writer,—he steps forth like a bridegroom,—bids All hail; brings in variety, and forbids the appetite to fail." Without following any settled track therefore, which would indeed be somewhat difficult in the circumstances, we shall browse at will on these pleasant pages, jotting down whatsoever has struck our fancy in reading them.

In pursuance of which plan we shall accordingly begin by taking Lord Ribblesdale to task for two little sins of commission,—partly to show that we have some conscience, and partly also to show the extent and accuracy of our own reading, which is, we are given to understand, the first duty of all reviewers. Lord Ribblesdale exhibits a surprising wealth and aptitude of quotation and allusion, but he has slipped twice, and, so far as we know, only twice. On that dismal day in the fog, when Agitator disturbed the potboy's equanimity, he compares himself to Watchorn who "before Sir Harry Scattercash had given him the second glass of port wine was longing not to hunt." Champagne, if you please, my lord. "'What will you wet your whistle with after your fine speech?' asked Lady Scattercash. 'Take a tumbler of champagne, if there is any,' replied Watchorn, looking about for a long-necked bottle;" and it was after one tumbler of that exhilarating liquid that the day seemed "changed some-'ow" to the huntsman of the Nonsuch

hounds. Again, when in describing the dress of M. Triboulet, the old French riding-master, he enumerates "a high black stock admirably tied, for like Beau Brummell, he never had a failure," he has rather missed the point of the story. A friend, paying a morning visit to the Beau, on his way upstairs met the valet coming down with an armful of apparently clean white neckcloths. "What may these be?" asked the curious friend. "These, sir," answered the valet with a serious air, "are our failures."

And these, so far as we have discovered, are Lord Ribblesdale's only failures. It will be allowed that they are not very serious. He laments indeed his inability to satisfy Dr. Jowett's conception of history, but we do not think that failure need move him very deeply. History, that eminent man is reported to have said, should be biography; but a history of the Royal Buckhounds which should contain the biographies of all their masters from Osborne Lovel, Henry the Second's Chamberlain, to Lord Coventry, for a period, that is to say, of some seven hundred years, might possibly be a very entertaining work, but would certainly be a very bulky one. Nor would it, we suspect, help us very much to a knowledge of the royal pack as an historical institution. Lord Rochford, for instance, the hapless brother of a hapless sister, was one of its masters; Lord Leicester, the husband of Amy Robsart and friend of Queen Elizabeth, was another; Lord Sandwich, the notorious Jemmy Twitcher, was also of the number. One way and another we know not a little of these men, but the knowledge does not include much information about the Buckhounds. Biographies of the huntsmen might be more to the purpose; if they were all as well known to

us as Charles Davis, then we might have such a history of the pack as might have satisfied even Dr. Jowett. But that is past praying for, and such researches as have been made into the abyss of time have not produced any large or profitable result. Some few years ago an attempt was made to write a history of the Buckhounds on antiquarian lines by Mr. J. P. Hore, but it does not seem to have been especially successful, and is now apparently out of print. From the compliments Lord Ribblesdale pays to it we gather that it was a most conscientious and learned work, but, like so many learned and conscientious things, not very entertaining; a history, we should fancy, more in the style of the Bishop of Oxford than of Mr. Froude. The author, we are told, explored every available source of official information. "He has brought a trained and patient industry to bear upon much old English and dog Latin. Pipe-rolls and the penitralia of public offices have been forced to yield their increase and been turned into type and plain figures. But cheerfully as he threads his way through this valley of dry bones and the dust of ages, Mr. Hore laments over and over again the absence of authentic records of actual hunting incidents. Where as an investigator he has failed, I am not likely to succeed."

For our own part we are glad that Lord Ribblesdale has not spent himself on such vain endeavours. Pipe-rolls and dog Latin are but as east wind to the hungry belly. An old workhouse dame told the Druid that, when a little maid, she had seen the deer taken at Leatherhead in George the Third's time. The years had apparently created some confusion in her mind between the King and his huntsman. "His Majesty had a scarlet coat and jockey cap, with gold all about; he had a star on his

heart, and we all fell on our knees." A touch like that is worth all the pipe-rolls in the Exchequer Office. Lord Ribblesdale has done wisely in not seeking to emulate Mr. Hore. In the introductory chapter written for him by Mr. Edward Burrows, the reader with a taste for antiquities of this sort will find ample means for gratifying it. Mr. Burrows is himself a descendant of the ancient family of Brocas, a name familiar to all Etonians, though not many, we suspect, could give its derivation; and from the family papers in his possession he has compiled a brief but learned history of that hereditary mastership of the Royal Buckhounds which his ancestors enjoyed for close upon three centuries. The mastership seems to have been originally an appanage of the estate of Hunter's Manor at Little Weldon in Northamptonshire. Early in the fourteenth century Thomas de Borhunte (a good hunting name) married Margaret Lovel, a descendant of Osborne Lovel, Henry the Second's Chamberlain, who seems to have been the first master of the royal pack, and thus acquired the mastership for himself. In 1363 Sir Bernard Brocas, a Gascon knight in high favour with Edward the Third, married Mary, widow of Sir John de Borhunte, and with her the lordship of Hunter's Manor and the hereditary mastership of the Buckhounds passed into the family of Brocas, who held it till in 1633 Thomas Brocas sold the estate and the office to Sir Lewis Watson, afterwards Lord Rockingham. They were fine fellows these Brocuses, no doubt, gallant and loyal, though one of them did lose his head for a plot against Henry the Fourth, and this little history of them comes with a good grace from their descendant. But it cannot be said to help us on much with the purpose of the book. The most interesting fact we have learned

from it, or what seems so to us, is that, in 1330, Sir John de Brocas bought three chargers for the King's riding at the respective prices of £120, £70, and £50, which, according to Mr. Burrows, would at the present day be equivalent to £2,400, £1,400, and £1,000. Lord Maryborough (afterwards Lord Mornington), when Master in William the Fourth's reign, gave, as Lord Ribblesdale tells, £525 for a dappled grey horse on which to lead the royal procession up the course at Ascot. Five hundred guineas is not an everyday price, even for a South African speculator ; but it sinks to the level of one of the Duke's two-penny dams beside the £2,400 paid for the good Pomers, who was also a grey, with a black head. In truth this hereditary mastership seems to have been rather a family privilege than a royal office, something akin to the Baron of Bradwardine's claim to pull off the royal boots ; at all events it had become obsolete long before Thomas Brocas sold it. As the years advanced and a new order of things came with them, this feudal tenure, which could be bought and sold at will, was found to be an inconvenient thing. Henry the Eighth accordingly ignored it,—even he could not altogether abolish it—and established the Privy Buckhounds, of which George Boleyn, Anne's handsome brother, raised first to the peerage and afterwards to the scaffold, was the first master. And this marks the real beginning of the Buckhounds as a royal institution. The Norman and Plantagenet kings were always mighty hunters, and kept hounds for their delectation as did many of their nobles and some of their ecclesiastics ; but the real forerunners of the pack which Lord Ribblesdale celebrates seem to have been the Privy Buckhounds of King Henry the Eighth.

So much then for the historical ori-

gin of the Queen's Hounds, and enough. It is clear that there is nothing satisfactory, nothing vital to be got from this groping in the dust of ages, and the game seems to us hardly worth the innumerable candles that must be lit to pursue it. "Hunting," said Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild once to Lord Ribblesdale, "is a charming amusement, but a detestable occupation." We cordially agree with the Baron, though it is obviously lucky for the amusement that everybody does not object to the occupation ; and we commend his most sensible observation to those enthusiasts who are beginning to deafen us with their rather rampant admiration for athletic exercises, as though cricket and football and golf, all excellent amusements in their way, were the beginning and end of man's existence. Certainly hunting is a charming amusement : there is none like it ; but we confess to being unable to take it quite so seriously as to spend upon tracking the history of a pack of hounds as much labour and research as might be necessary to establish, let us say, a doubtful point in a Scottish pedigree. There is, however (and fortunately for the more indolent herd) an honest sort of folk about to whom such dusty toil is in itself an amusement ; to them we will respectfully, and cheerfully, leave it.

But though the Royal Buckhounds as an institution can trace their descent back to bluff King Harry, the present fashion of hunting their game began with good King George. The date cannot be fixed precisely, but it is certain that the carted deer was first used in George the Third's reign, when Enclosure Acts and the spread of agriculture had made the chase of the wild stag impossible in the settled districts of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. His Majesty was no thruster (which, seeing that he rode nineteen stone, is not surprising), and the

hounds had frequently to be stopped for him. He rode to a pilot, but as the following little anecdote shows, reserved to himself an ample discretion. "On one occasion they came to a place which the King did not quite fancy. He hung a little. 'John has gone over, your Majesty,' said one of the esquires, hoping no doubt that a hole might be made for him. 'Then you may go after him,' said the King, and jogged off to find a nicer place." Most of the household seem to have taken their cue from their royal master; but one of the esquires, Colonel Gwyn (who married Goldsmith's Jessamy Bride), went so well in a famous run in the autumn of 1797 that he was complimented (by the Nimrod of the day, we presume,) upon displaying "more of the genuine unadulterated sportsman than the effeminate courtier."

The hounds were from twenty-four to twenty-six inches, lemon-pyes and black and white; they could go very fast, we are told, for half an hour, giving tongue the while like Big Ben, but they must soon have sobered down, for some of the runs seem to have covered a portentous tract of country. Perhaps none was quite so long as that famous one in Charles the Second's reign, when a Swinley deer ran for seventy miles before it was taken near Lord Petre's in Essex, and the Duke of York, with the master, Colonel Graham, were among the few who lived to the end. But they must have been long enough, to judge by the names earned by two of the stags, Moonshine and Starlight. The deer were housed in the same paddocks in Swinley as the deer of to-day, and close to them stood the Master's hunting-lodge, where high jinks used to go on in the old roystering three-bottle time. On June 4th, the King's birthday, as Eton boys know well, the Master used to give a dinner to the farmers and foresters, and sometimes

the King would drive over from Windsor and watch the lads and lasses footing it on the green in front of the house. The building was dismantled and pulled down in 1831, but the grounds may still be faintly traced. The King rode in a light blue coat with black velvet cuffs, top-boots buckled behind, and, after 1786, a hunting-cap. The Master wore the familiar gold belt and couples, but apparently a green coat faced with red, something like the hunting-coat of the Second Empire. The yeomen-prickers wore the same heavy gold-laced scarlet coats as now, and carried French horns, which they wound lustily on every conceivable occasion. Later on a less noisy but more efficient instrument was added to the horns. After Mr. Mellish, Master of the Epping Forest Hounds, had been robbed and murdered by a highwayman on his return from hunting, a couple of boys was added to the establishment, each armed with a brace of horse-pistols. When the run was ended these pistols were handed to two of the yeomen-prickers, whose duty it was to escort his Majesty back to Windsor.

In 1813 the Duke of Richmond turned from hunting to racing, and gave his pack to the Prince Regent. The old buckhounds were bought by Colonel Thornton to go to France, and their place taken by the Goodwood foxhounds. This marks the beginning of a new era in the annals of the royal hunt, and the central figure of that era is Charles Davis. We may be mistaken, but it looks to us as though Lord Ribblesdale had heard so much about Davis that he has grown to regard him somewhat as the Athenians regarded Aristides. Perhaps it is a natural feeling in the circumstances. Davis is the great tradition of the Queen's Hounds; he had become, one may say, a tradition

in his own lifetime ; and traditions are apt to pall upon the younger generations. " You should have seen So-and-So," is the most exasperating collection of words in the English language. It seems, too, that Davis was used to indulge in lamentations over the social decadence of Ascot races, which had become, he thought, vulgarised and common ; and this, one can understand, would not endear him to the leaders of the new order.

The good of other times let others state, I think it lucky I was born so late.

We are indebted to his lordship for the quotation, the bearing of which, as of Mr. Bunsby's aphorisms, lies in the application.

Charles Davis's horsemanship was as stainless as King Arthur's morals. But I imagine his riding appealed to the head rather than the heart. As we have seen, the expression on his features was severe and serious, and I cannot help thinking that his riding to hounds may have been a little wanting in geniality—perfect in form and satisfying in result—but somehow wanting in that impalpable quality which makes riding over an intricate country with some people so amusing. In a point to point steeplechase Jem Mason rode Lottery over a locked gate 5 ft. 6 in. high, off a newly-stoned road, in preference to a hairy bullfinch at the side. " I'll be hanged," he said to his friends when they were walking over the ground, " if I am going to scratch my face, for I am going to the opera tonight"; and Lottery jumped it like an antelope. There was no shadow of turning about Davis, but he would never have said that. Doubtless, had it been a question of rescuing the Trump or the Miller, he would have ridden over the gate, but he would have done it with the somewhat dismal zeal of a permanent official, rather than the zest of a man of pleasure. I admit 5 ft. 6 in. high, and the take-off, would make most people feel grave.

Perhaps, too, Davis took himself a little seriously. He read the newspapers religiously; went to church regularly; never had a horse out on Sundays; made an excellent speech; favoured the Whigs in

politics. All these things contributed to make up a valuable and respectable citizen. Moreover, the even and deserved prosperity of his career, his converse—almost identity—with great personages, and the responsible authority of his position may easily have induced a certain semi-royal aloofness. I feel confident that he was never in anything like a scrape—this is of itself quite a misfortune—and I question whether he ever had much to do with the scrapes and shifts of others. Under the startling influence of gratitude, Tom Oliver once swore a great oath that he would fight up to his knees in blood for Jem Mason, who had won him £100 with Trust-Me-Not, relieved him of the pressing society of the bailiffs, and set him again on his rather unsteady legs. But it is doubtful whether anybody ever had occasion to enter into such savage covenants for Davis. We might have asked him to stand godfather to our first-born, or act as trustee to our marriage-settlement—if in order—but we should not have dared to write to him as Tom Oliver did to Mason, to say we were in Short Street and entertaining the sheriff of the county.

This is very good fun, but it strikes us as a little beside the point. Let it be granted that, except their fine horsemanship, there was nothing in common between Charles Davis and Jem Mason, who, besides his other accomplishments, had a playful fancy, and a faculty for expressing it, to which Davis could lay no claim. But the comparison is surely not quite fair. Davis was a huntsman, in an exceptionally responsible position; Mason was a professional steeple-chaser and a horse-dealer. Each in his own line was incomparable; but the lines did not march. Even in the matter of riding a comparison is hardly possible. Davis rode to hunt; Mason hunted to ride, and rode, we may add, to sell. Whether Davis would have chosen the gate or the bullfinch, had a choice been allowed him, we cannot say; probably, being a huntsman first, he would have chosen whichever brought him soonest to his hounds and least

distressed his horse. But bullfinch or gate, whichever it was to be, he would have faced it as cheerfully as Mason, and never have given a second thought to it when once it lay behind him. In seat and hands he was by all accounts a match for Mason himself ; and if he did not, like that redoubtable worthy, look out for the big places to jump, which was plainly not his business, he never turned aside from them when they came in his way. Our own recollections of Davis are only those of a youngster, though we had heard much talk about him long before we had set eyes on him ; but really we do not think he was quite the just man made perfect, still less the cold-blooded, tape-bound official that Lord Ribblesdale seems to imagine him to have been. For the newspapers and speeches we cannot vouch, never having seen him read the one or heard him make the other ; and favouring the Whigs may be a more heinous offence in Radical eyes than we wot of. But Davis was certainly a regular church-goer. When we first made the old gentleman's acquaintance the nearest church to Ascot was at Sunninghill, which entailed a walk of two miles, with a somewhat dismal service at the end of it. So long as he could get about at all the old man faced the four miles as stoutly as he used in his prime to face the big Berkshire banks, the Aylesbury doubles, or the flying fences of the Harrow Weald ; and the prospect of his companionship availed more than the domestic ukase in propelling our unwilling legs churchwards. Though upwards of seventy then he was as straight and spare as a lance-shaft, always scrupulously dressed ; even at this distance of time we can recall with despair the miraculous folds of his white neckcloth. In our boyish eyes he was an incomparable hero, and to be praised by

him for any equestrian feat a clever little Irish mare had performed for us was "to be sent up for good" indeed. In the field he was the Royal Huntsman first and last,—"my gentleman huntsman," George the Fourth used to call him—but off duty he could be a most agreeable companion. Perhaps he unbent more to a boy ; perhaps he was amused by his young hearer's admiration ; over our recollection of him at any rate there hangs no shadow of semi-royal aloofness. If we could recollect but a tithe of the tales he used to tell us of the old riding-days, and of the ancient heroes, man and horse, hound and stag, whose portraits covered the walls of his little parlour, we might almost rival the Druid himself. But alas !—

Labuntur anni, Postume, Postume,
The years glide away, and the stories are
lost to me !

Davis's great riding-days had passed long before we knew him, but the fame of them was still green in the land. Born at Windsor in 1788, he served an apprenticeship under his father, who hunted the King's harriers, and was promoted to the Buckhounds in 1813, as first whip to Sharpe, the Duke of Richmond's huntsman, who had come with the Goodwood pack to Ascot, and whose daughter he subsequently married, though he left no family. In 1822 he was made huntsman, and had therefore carried the horn for eight-and-thirty years when we first heard him blow it.

But his fame as huntsman and horseman needs no refurbishing. There were giants in those days, as hereafter there will, no doubt, be giants in these, and high among them stands the figure of Charles Davis. The Druid has told his exploits with all his wonted vivacity, and Lord Ribblesdale has added not a little to the Druid. From two veterans especially he has gathered

some pleasant reminiscences of the old man, from Dr. Croft of Bracknell and Mr. Cordery of Swallowfield. Both born and bred in Berkshire, both fine riders and good sportsmen, better witnesses his lordship could not have called. They are both unanimous in their praise of Davis. "I thought him," writes Mr. Cordery, who can remember him in 1835, "as good as any one I ever saw on a saddle. Used to ride over a country very easy, and never seemed to distress his horse. He liked a clean, well-bred horse, and was master of him and his men and his field and his hounds. Respected by everyone, his word was law, his hounds he loved, and woe be to the man who rode over them." Dr. Croft is more explicit; Bracknell is nearer the centre of stag-hunting things than Swallowfield, and though the Doctor perhaps preferred to hunt the fox with Mr. Garth, he did not disdain a gallop after the stag; and, let us add from our own recollection, there was no better rider in either hunt. If ever a man went easily across a country Dr. Croft was he. So easily indeed did he slip along on those big, brown, somewhat rough-coated nags of his, that the cigar (which seemed as indispensable a part of his equipment as the antigropelos and the straight-cutting whip) seemed never to need re-lighting; though to be sure, when hounds ran straight and fast over that cramped country, with its big overgrown banks and hairy ditches, it was mostly the Doctor's back that one saw, and he might count himself a lucky man who kept that in sight.

Davis's best time [he writes] was before mine, but he was very good in my younger days. He left much in his latter days to his men, but he was always near enough to see what was going on. His hounds in the forest were as perfect in close hunting as harriers.

They were left to depend on themselves, and so required but little assistance. "Let them alone," were his words to his whips at check. I never heard him say anything about a bad scent; he told me he would rather have a third-rate scent for his hounds, as the pace was then quite fast enough for pleasure, as the pack would have to fling round occasionally and give you a chance to be nearer to them. The Bracknell country was very difficult to get over in former times, — hedgerows very broad, and ditches wide and blind, much overgrown with grass and brambles. Davis had his field under good control, and he never minced the matter if he saw any man riding unfairly. His language was strong and not always parliamentary, but was most effective at the time, and, I have heard, lasted into the future. If his temper was hasty, it was soon over and forgotten. He was a perfect gentleman in appearance, manner and conversation, well educated, and, I should say, of good ability.

These hounds, as you know, from the first were foxhounds. I believe he bred from the best of his own and others, but he managed somehow to make them peculiarly his own, so much finer and more racy-looking than even the foxhounds of the present day. Getting them faster began, I dare say, when the King [George the Fourth] told him to make them fast enough to run away from the field. This most certainly he did, for they ran away from the field on several occasions in the Harrow country, and I have experience of their doing this in the Bracknell country.

His hounds appeared to love him, and one of the prettiest parts of the day was when a check occurred, to see them fly to his call, and all the pack cluster round his horse, and he take them to a holloa and plant them on the line of scent. I think this control was due in a great measure to his system of entering the young hounds in the forest in October. The deer were nearly always taken without injury, and many were hunted for years, and knew how to take care of themselves.

At seventy-two the hardest rider may be permitted to rest under his laurels, and perhaps Davis had done better to retire sooner than he did. But he had become a part and parcel of the hunt, an institution which

everyone was loth to lose ; and he himself, though conscious that his day was done, had the feeling, which comes to so many men at the close of a long and active career, that life and work would be ended together. "When I give up the horn," we can remember him saying, "I shall not live to see another wear it." He did not ; at the end of the season of 1866 he resigned, and before his successor, Harry King, who had acted as his first whip for many years, had fairly begun the new season, Charles Davis was dead. Lord Ribblesdale strikes a true and graceful note in his parting tribute to the old man's memory.

It was manifest that his death had made a gap, and that his life had made quite a particular impression upon a considerab'e public. Davis's was a conspicuous career, many things conspicuously English had contributed to his renown. But the distinction of his looks and ways, the eloquence of his seat, the scarlet and gold of his public duties, the bold serenity of his horsemanship are not of themselves enough to account for the vitality of his prestige and tradition. All these things we admire in horse and hound loving England ; all these things will be associated with and ornament his memory and profession. But there is something else of Charles Davis which I like to think lives to inspire and to encourage. There is the staidness of his private life ; there is the conduct of responsible duties ; there is the example he has left us of endeavour to provide things honest in the sight of all men.

There were brave men before Agamemnon, and there have been many brave men since. If there has never been quite a second Charles Davis,—and a combination of circumstances, a combination of the man and the moment, no doubt helped to make him unique—the Royal Hunt can boast of many another good servant. It can boast, for instance, of Frank Goodall, who came to Ascot from Mr. Tailby's in 1872 and hunted the country for sixteen years. No man

ever rode better to hounds, and none ever hunted them better ; one may say of him what he said of his favourite horse Crusader, no fence was too big, no water too wide, and no day too long for him. He kept an excellent diary too, and evidently was no mean practitioner with the pen. One phrase of his quoted by Lord Ribblesdale strikes us as particularly happy. He is recording a memorable run after a hind called Miss Headington, when out of a field of four hundred only thirty-eight showed their faces at the finish ; "My horse Cardinal," he writes, "carried me well, although he began to go at last *very, very politely.*" Our young masters of style, who give so much time to the word that they have none left to spare for the thought, might envy Goodall that phrase,—if they could appreciate its point.

Some changes of course there have been. The Harrow country, which reminded Goodall of Leicestershire, has been lost, and the hounds go no more into the New Forest or the Vale of Aylesbury, which has its own stag-hounds now. Hunting in the New Forest must have been a somewhat limited form of pleasure, for the riders at all events. After a day there in 1848 Lords Canning, Granville, and Rivers are said to have been so disgusted with the danger of the ground that they vowed never to hunt there again ; as one man had been killed, three others badly hurt, and Lord Granville's face cut by the boughs of a tree, there seems to have been some reason in their vow. Accidents will happen of course in the most open country in the world, but there at least you get some fun for your money, whereas forest-hunting, though doubtless very good training for the hounds, and a pretty thing to watch, is not, we think most people will admit, the most agreeable form of riding.

But those visits to the Vale must have been high fun,—and high fun in more ways than one when Lords Errol and Waterford held festival at the old White Hart in Aylesbury. Those were the palmy days of steeplechasing,—the genuine chasing, not the bastard thing which goes by that name now—the days of Becher and Vivian (“who used to gallop open-mouthed over the doubles”), Jem Mason and Lottery, the Squire and Grimaldi, the Marquis and Cock Robin. Becher and Vivian won the first race run at Aylesbury, the Captain riding with both his wrists bandaged. “He fell over a gate,” writes the Druid, “and got ducked in the river; but got first past the winning flags notwithstanding.” He tells us of another famous time (somewhere in the thirties, we take it, but the Druid has a noble scorn of dates), when there were two races, one for the light weights and one for the heavies. The illustrious Bill Bean should (or so he thought) have won the former on Rochelle, but when close home he made too nice a thing of it between two trees and was knocked out of his saddle. He had not been over the ground, it seems, like the other riders, and not knowing the exact course of the river, had to jump it, and a gate on a bridge as well; a superfluous river, with a gate thrown in, might have accounted for Bill even without the two trees. “It was a great day,” writes the Druid in an ecstasy, “and Mr. Davis, who gave the starting signal, brought out the staghounds as soon as the chases were over [they began at half-past nine in the morning] and uncarted one of his flying haviers.” In the moonlight of memory fences, like other things, are apt to loom prodigiously large; but it is certain that steeple-chasing was no pony’s play in those days. We remember hearing Davis tell how on one of these occasions (perhaps on

this very one) he refused to start the riders till certain alterations had been made in the line, lest, as he said, he should be liable to a charge of manslaughter. A big fence in the way of business was all very well, but some of these were, the veteran assured us, such as no horse or man should be set to ride at. It was to the Vale that Davis gave the credit of one of his best runs, from Aylesbury to Twyford Mill; it was in Lord Lichfield’s mastership, and has been thus graphically described by the Druid.

Mr. Davis rode the Clipper, so called from being the first that was ever clipped for royal use. He had been originally in harness, and as he was up to sixteen stone, and his rider, even with a 7-lb. coat, did not ride above ten stone, he went through from end to end over grass in little more than an hour and a quarter. The hounds never checked for bullocks or anything else; and as Mr. Davis lay in the ditch with one arm round the deer’s neck, he took out his watch with the other. For twenty minutes he had no companions save the miller and his men, who were not a little astonished at the position of affairs; a gasping huntsman, “a hor-ned stag,” and a pack baying like mad.

The heroes of the old chasing-days have gone, and the visits to the Vale have gone with them; but the Royal Hunt still flourishes, and will continue to flourish, despite its opponents in the Press, until its appointed time shall have come. Lord Ribblesdale has little difficulty in demolishing this opposition, and does so with equal good sense and good temper; and he has, we may add, been materially assisted in the operation by his opponents’ palpable ignorance of their subject. As to the charge of cruelty, of course all sport which takes life for man’s amusement must be cruel, if you will have it so, but tried by the literal law hunting the carted deer must be the least cruel because

it takes less life than any other form of sport. In the three years of Lord Ribblesdale's mastership five deer, at the most, were killed, and not one of these was touched by the hounds. In the seven years during which we hunted with the Queen's we can only recollect seeing one deer killed, which had taken soil in a large pond and was pulled down before the hounds could be stopped. Another objection has been urged on the grounds that hunting the carted deer has degenerated into a somewhat ignoble form of sport, which the spread of fox-hunting no longer renders necessary for man's amusement. On this side of the question Lord Ribblesdale, naturally enough, does not touch; but, though we have owed many a good gallop to the Queen's Hounds, we have always felt it in our hearts to be an objection there might be some difficulty in answering. A few years ago there was some talk of transforming the pack into foxhounds when the day (a melancholy day for Berkshire) should come that Mr. Garth's faithful services were no longer available. The idea seemed feasible, and the change, we have been assured, would be universally popular. But we have also been assured that it would be universally unpopular; and, as in each case our informant had the best possible opportunities for knowing what he was talking about, it may be assumed that, as with most other subjects of controversy, there is much to be said on both sides. It is a question

which, as Lord Ribblesdale pertinently observes, time, and time alone, can decide. "Wire in Middlesex, the villa in Berks, the pheasant in Bucks, all the apparatus of population and residential amenity have changed the face and habits of the Queen's country. The Master is obliged to bear constantly in mind that in many parts of a wide district he no longer has the free warren essential to stag-hunting." On the Surrey and Hampshire side there is still a wide extent of rough country, unspoiled by wire or villa and but sparsely peopled by the pheasant, which might easily be made yet wider. This would be good for the hounds and for the deer, and the sport would probably be better worth its name to all but those who hunt only to gallop and jump. But it would not, we suspect, be popular with the London division, and the London division, though not, we are glad to hear, so large as it used to be, is still, we presume, something of a factor in the Royal Hunt. It is this matter of country which will some day decide this question, but the day is not yet. Threatened institutions have a knack of dying hard, and for many a long year to come the Royal Buckhounds may continue to afford a healthy and harmless pleasure to hundreds of honest souls un vexed by nice points of casuistry or lofty ideals of sport. And, we will add in conclusion, if future generations feel the need of another historian, they will be lucky to find one so good as Lord Ribblesdale.